

YOUNG AMERICA

By

FREDERICK BALLARD



SAMUEL FRENCH, 28-30 West 38th St., New York

YOUNG AMERICA

A Play in Three Acts

BY

FREDERICK BALLARD

(Suggested by Pearl Franklin's "MRS. DORAY" stories)

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no 1

TO MY MOTHER AND FATHER

The following is a copy of the play-bill of the first performance of "Young America":

Astor Theater, New York City Aug. 29th, 1915

COHAN & HARRIS

PRESENT

YOUNG AMERICA

A PLAY IN THREE ACTS

BY

FREDERICK BALLARD

Staged under the direction of Sam Forrest

ORIGINAL CAST

The characters appear in the order in which they are named

JACK DORAY	Otto Kruger
EDITH DORAY	Peggy Wood
MRS. MCGUIRE	Adella Barker
ART SIMPSON	Percy Helton
JIM REUTER	Charles Dow Clark
BENNY KING	Sam Coit
BILLY COOMBS	William Sampson
TERESA MCGUIRE	Maxine Mazanovich
PATSY MCGUIRE	Jess Kelley
WILLIE WRIGHT	Tonny Dillion
ROMNEY BURGESS	Edgar Nelson
FANNY KING	Doris Kelley
MARJORIE TIMMINS	Ethel May Davis
THE DOG	Jasper
NELS LARSON	Dixie Taylor
COURT OFFICER	Felix McGuire
THE CLERK	Harry E. Willard
ISAAC SLAVINSKY	Joseph Berger
WASHINGTON, WHITE	Norman Allen
MRS. WHITE	Manda Wilson
JUDGE PALMER	Forreſt Robinson
NUTTY BEEMER	Benny Sweeney
PINTO	Just Pinto

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ACT I Living Room at the Dorays' suburban cottage, 8 P. M., May 27th.

ACT II Juvenile Court Room, 10 A. M., 2 days later.

ACT III Same as Act I, 4 A. M., next day.

Note: The Dog in this play need not be a trick dog. Any dog that will lie still when told will suffice. The homlier the dog, the better.

BACK DROP

HEDGE

LARGE WINDOW

CHINA SHELVES

DOOR

STAIRS LEADING TO BED CHAMBER

PLATFORM

SMALL TABLE
TELEPHONE
ON TABLE

CHAIR

SMALL RUG

COUCH

SMALL RUG

DOOR

VACUUM CLEANER

ARM CHAIR

SEWING STAND

ROCKER

SMALL RUG

WINDOW

LARGE RUG

CHAIR

CHAIR

CHAIR

CHAIR

CHAIR

CHAIR

DINING ROOM TABLE

SMALL RUG

SIDE BOARD

SMALL RUG

CHAIR

CHAIR

CHAIR

CHAIR

YOUNG AMERICA ACT Ist III

YOUNG AMERICA

ACT I

SCENE:—*The combined living and dining-room of the Dorays' suburban cottage, 8 P. M. May 27th. It is a cozy unpretentious but tastefully furnished room with five entrances: L.U.E. the front door opening onto veranda. Rear R. a swinging door opening into pantry and kitchen. R.X. 3 stairs leading to upstairs bedrooms. Rear center, large French windows with Swiss curtains and a long window-seat. When the windows are open the Dorays' flowering hedge can be seen and beyond hedge (on back drop) a cottage across the street. Cottage has well kept lawn and shade trees. L. 2 another, but small, French window with window seat.*

The furniture of the room consists of a round fumed oak dining-table with three chairs to match, R. C. A small buffet to match against wall, R. 2. China plates, silverware decanter, etc. on buffet. Wicker rocking chair, L. C. Heavy arm chair, upholstered with flowered cretonne, against wall, between L.U.D. and L. 2 window. Concealed behind up-stage side of chair is a small portable electric vacuum cleaner. It is practical, has about fifteen feet of electric cable, ten feet of rubber hose and is connected with electric wall socket, which is just below L.U.D. and about four feet from floor. A pretty cretonne sofa with pillow to L. of rear window. At R. end of sofa a pretty little wicker sewing-stand. It is portable, has a wicker handle, and contains darning yarns and crocheting thread,

darning needles and crochet hooks. A telephone table with phone on it at R. of rear window. Small chair at L. side of table. Upholstered chair to R.

A fumed oak clock on wall at L. of window. Engravings and two Frederick Remington prints on walls. Cretonne draperies to match sofa and window seats.

The room is lighted by four electric wall lamps above and below buffet, above and below L. D. and a pretty chandelier suspended from center of ceiling.

AT RISE:—JACK DORAY *discovered in easy chair reading newspaper. He is a good-looking pleasant young man of medium height and build. He wears a smoking jacket and leather house slippers. He is reading the sporting section of the evening paper.*

Pause, during which an occasional clatter of dishes is heard off R. the pantry door being open.

DORAY. *(naturally and without looking up from paper)* Edie!

MRS. D. *(pleasantly, from off R.)* Yes?

DORAY. *Christy Mathewson made a home run today. Scored Merkle and shoved the Giants up a peg. (pause. dishes clatter off R. DORAY glances curiously at door R. then:)* You don't seem to care much.

MRS. D. *(off R.)* Yes, I do. *(DORAY resumes his reading. After a slight pause MRS. DORAY enters from R. MRS. DORAY is a pretty young woman, in house dress and kitchen apron and carries some plates in her hand. As she crosses to buffet with plates.)* What was it you said about Christy Mathewson and a peg? *(DORAY glances at her. She*

puts plates on buffet) I didn't quite understand. *(now at R. of DORAY'S chair; DORAY has resumed reading)* You see, I was washing the dishes—*(playfully ironical, with a little smile)*—and wiping them. *(turning back to him)* Here, unbutton my apron, will you, dear?

DORAY. *(Unbuttoning her apron)* Honey, you know I told you you could have a maid.

MRS. D. *(removing apron and putting it in lower drawer of buffet)* I know it, dear, and it was sweet of you, but in a cozy little home such as this, why have a maid? Half the fun of keeping house is in doing the work, especially when one's house has as many labor saving devices as ours has. *(starts across L. sees cigar ashes C. stops. Pointing at ashes on floor)* Now, what's that?

DORAY. I don't know.

MRS. D. It's cigar ashes.

DORAY. *(holding up pipe)* I'm smoking a pipe.

MRS. D. On my nice clean floor too. *(crossing to vacuum cleaner)* I'll clean it up.

DORAY. *(rising)* Let me do it.

MRS. No, I'll do it myself. *(picks up the hose of vacuum cleaner.)*

DORAY. *(sitting)* Oh, I see. You like to use that thing.

MRS. D. *(crossing C. with hose)* Well, it's a lot better than the servants around here. I wouldn't have them about.

DORAY. All right, Edie, if that's the way you feel about it. *(resumes reading)*

MRS. D. *(prettily, as she rests cleaning hose upright on floor)* That is the way I feel about it—at least, that is the way I feel about it now. Of course when we have a family it will be different. We shall have to have a lot of servants

then. (*counting on her fingers*) There will be a cook, and a maid, and a nurse girl, and a butler to keep the little ones amused, and a chauffeur to take them out driving, and a gardener, to show them how to raise pretty little flowers and supply them with fresh green vegetables every day, and—oh, mercy only knows how many others! But until we do have children, dear— (*pause, and looks at DORAY who is engrossed in his newspaper—then dryly*) Are you listening?

DORAY. Yes, dear. (*with eyes on the paper*) My, but there were some close scores today.

MRS. D. That's nice. Now, as I was saying, until we do have children we will not have a maid. I shall do all my own house work. (*starts the motor of vacuum cleaner and cleans up ashes with cleaner as she sings. DORAY hums the tune as he reads. Phone rings, MRS. D. hears it. DORAY doesn't. Pause, during which MRS. DORAY keeps on cleaning carpet. Phone rings again*) Yes, yes, I'm coming, I'm coming. (*Turns off motor and hastens to 'phone*)

DORAY. (*glancing up from paper*) Oh, did the phone ring?

MRS. D. (*picking up phone*) Yes, dear, twice. (*in phone*) Hello—Yes—I'll ask him. (*to DORAY*) Benny King wants to know how your appetite is?

DORAY. Appetite? Oh, I know, he wants a game of pitch. Tell him I'll be right over. (*tosses paper aside, starts upstairs*)

MRS. D. (*in phone*) Jack says it's fine, and for you to come right over.

DORAY. I said no such thing. (*DORAY returns from stairs, and tries to take receiver from her*)

MRS. D. (*in phone*) And bring Mrs. King with you—All right, good bye. (*hangs up receiver hastily*)

DORAY. Come here! (*pointing to imaginary line at his feet*) Why didn't you tell him what I told you to?

MRS. D. Because, loving my husband dearly, and my husband being away all day long, I wish to be with him as much as possible when he is at home.

DORAY. You could have gone over there with me. (*comes down R.*)

MRS. D. (*smiling*) Yes, but this is home. (*crossing to vacuum cleaner*)

DORAY. Do you think I want to stay home every night?

MRS. D. Well, do you think Benny King does? (*Phone rings. Both run for it. DORAY gets there first, grabs up the phone*)

DORAY. (*in phone*) Hello!

MRS. D. If that's Benny King you tell him to come.

DORAY. (*to Mrs. D.*) It isn't—it's Billy Coombs.

MRS. D. (*L. of him*) Ask him to come over too.

DORAY. Hush up or I'll kiss you. (*in phone*) No, not you, you big boob.—Sorry, Bill, but why can't you come over here? Benny's coming and we'll have a three-handed game.

MRS. D. Ask him to bring Mrs. Coombs. (*in telephone*) Bring Mrs. Coombs!

DORAY. Hear that? Yes, that's my wife! Who did you think it was? Oh, I see? (*laughs*) All right. (*hangs up receiver*)

MRS. D. (*going L.*) Is Mrs. Coombs coming?

DORAY. (*coming down to table*) No.

MRS. D. Why not? (*picking up vacuum hose and placing it on L. side of chair*)

DORAY. She's reading a new novel by Robert W. Chambers and Billy can't make her break away. (*sits R. of table and picks up paper*)

MRS. D. (*whimsically*) Poor Billy. (*door bell rings.*)

DORAY. (*jumping up*) I'll answer it.

MRS. D. Never mind, I'll see who it is. (*goes to door and opens it*) Oh, good evening, Mrs. McGuire, come right in.

MRS. MCG. (*as she enters followed by Arthur, who carries basket of clean clothes. She is a large Irish washerwoman, homely and hard. ART is a likeable boy of fifteen, barefoot, somewhat ragged, needs a haircut, and looks abused and undernourished. He wears knee-pants, an old black sateen shirt, and cap. He is glum when he enters*) Good evening, Ma'am.

MRS. D. (*closes the door, and follows her to c.*)

MRS. MCG. (*to DORAY as she sees him*) How are you, Mr. Doray?

DORAY. Hello!

MRS. MCG. (*to MRS. DORAY*) I'd have had the washing here by six o'clock, but this little devil never came into the house until ten minutes ago, and of course I had to wait so's he could help me carry the basket.

MRS. D. Oh, that's all right, Mrs. McGuire; there's no hurry. (*pats ART on back*) Hello Arthur! How are you?

ART. (*smiling at MRS. DORAY*) All right.

MRS. MCG. (*to MRS. D.*) For goodness sakes don't do that. Kindness is the ruination of the likes of him. What he needs is his ears boxed, and

that's what he's going to get when I get him home. Yes, and ye're goin' to bed without your supper—you sassy little cockroach. (*shakes her finger threateningly at him.*)

MRS. D. Why, Arthur, what have you been doing?

ART. I ain't done nothin', Mrs. Doray.

MRS. MCG. You bet he ain't done nothing. He never does nothing. He's a lazy good for nothing little tadpole. (*to ART.*) Go on now, and carry that wash upstairs where it belongs. (*indicates stairs*) Go on. For goodness sake, hurry up.

ART. (*picking up basket, crosses R.*) All right; you needn't holler.

MRS. MCG. Don't you talk back to me. (*cuffs him.*) You sassy little divil.

MRS. D. Oh, don't do that, Mrs. McGuire. (*crosses*) Here, Arthur, let me help you.

DORAY. No, dear, please let me do that. (*rises*)

MRS. D. No, I have to count it and lay it out, anyway, so don't trouble. Come on, Arthur. (*as they go upstairs*) I'll have your basket ready for you in just a few moments, Mrs. McGuire.

MRS. MCGUIRE. Very well, ma'am. (*MRS. D. and ART exit upstairs. To DORAY*) I'd carry it myself, but them stairs is too much for me. 'Tis little enough I get for the work I do without climbing stairs and breaking my poor back entirely. (*to DORAY*) If you don't mind I'd like to sit down and rest me poor bones for a second or two.

DORAY. Certainly, Mrs. McGuire.

MRS. MCG. (*sits*) That murderin' little rascal has upset me so that I do believe I'm on the verge of a nervous collapsion. (*she sits L. of table as she says this*)

DORAY. What seems to be the trouble with your nephew?

MRS. MCG. Heaven only knows, Mrs. Doray. If I was that boy's own mother I couldn't be kinder or gentler to the little monkey, but 'tis no thanks I get. All he thinks about is that yaller dog o' his, or playing base ball and hoop-scotch and all the other games that was never meant for anything but the children of millionaires. Not a dollar does he bring into the house. Not a stroke of work does he do unless he's compelled to. If it wasn't that I promised his poor mother in Heaven—Lord rest her soul!—that I'd watch out for him and give him a home, I'd turn him over to the authorities and have him put in the Reform School where he belongs.

DORAY. That's too bad! You mean he's incorrigible?

MRS. MCG. He is that—whatever it means—and any other names you can think of to call him.

DORAY. Oh! well, he may turn out all right later on.

MRS. MCG. And what good will that do me? By the time he turns out all right me poor back will be broke over that wash tub; besides I have children of me own to work and worry for, without putting up with the likes of him. Ah! 'Tis a hard life I lead in this cruel world, so it is.

DORAY. (*continues to read*) Well, I'm very sorry for you, Mrs. McGuire. (*whistles happily*)

MRS. MCG. Yes, you act as if you were sorry. I wish to goodness I could be happy enough to whistle once in a while. 'Tis not even the price of a little stimulant can I afford to warm the cockles of me poor old broken heart. (*she sees the whiskey decanter on buffet*) You haven't a drop in the house

to spare, have you? (DORAY glances at her) 'Tis that tired I am that I feel I'll faint unless I get it.

DORAY. Get what? (MRS. MCG. looks over at the decanter shyly. DORAY glances at decanter then laughs at MRS. MCG.) Oh, that's it, eh? Why of course! Why didn't you say so in the first place? (goes to side-board for decanter and bottle)

MRS. MCG. (smiles) 'Tis backward and bashful I am about such things.

DORAY. (placing decanter and water bottle in front of her) Yes, so I see.

MRS. MCG. (putting water bottle aside and picking up decanter) Ah! Mr. Doray, if it wasn't for the likes of such fine gentlemen as you, sure this life wouldn't be worth living at all, at all.

(DORAY places small whiskey glass beside decanter and large water glass beside water bottle)

DORAY. There you are. (MRS. MCG. puts whiskey glass beside water bottle, takes water glass and puts beside decanter)

MRS. MCG. Well, here's lookin' at you. (as she pours a drink from decanter into water glass)

DORAY. Drink hearty!

MRS. MCG. Begorry but that's great. The prayers of a poor old woman will be for you this night, sir.

DORAY. I'll bet they will.

MRS. MCG. You bet your sweet life they will. (door bell rings)

DORAY. Come in.

REUTER. (enters—crosses down L. MRS. MCG. pauses, looks at REUTER) Excuse me, Jack.

DORAY. Hello Jim. (REUTER seeing the glass of whiskey in MRS. MCG.'s hand, pauses and coughs

significantly—comedy business. REUTER wants a drink and his expression and business show it. REUTER is a typical suburban policeman. He wears the usual uniform and a large badge. He is homely and very officious) What's the matter?

REUTER. I come to see Mrs. McGuire. (MRS. DORAY enters down stairs followed by ART with empty basket. To MRS. MCG.) I heard you were here and I came to warn you that them two kids of yours are down on Grove Street throwing stones at automobiles. They broke a window in Wilson's grocery store, too! Now, they're prètty young kids and I don't want to do anything that aint right, but unless you get ahold of 'em and promise to keep 'em off the street I'll have to treat 'em like grown-ups and run 'em in—do you understand? (*business as if trying to suck a berry seed out of a hollow tooth*)

MRS. MCG. Glory be to goodness! Is a poor woman's troubles never going to end? (NOTE:—during REUTER'S speech MRS. DORAY and ART have come downstairs and overheard. MRS. MCG. crosses to ART) You're the cause of this, you young spalpeen. 'Tis the tricks of a hoodlum you've taught them. You dirty little ragamuffin. (*she pulls his hair*)

ART. Leave me alone. 'Taint my fault. (*pulls away from her and puts basket in front of settee—drop down R. of REUTER*)

MRS. D. (R. C.) Please don't be so hard on the boy, Mrs. McGuire. He isn't to blame.

MRS. MCG. If he ain't who is? Two better children than me own never lived until he came into the house. 'Tis only imitating him, so they are.

REUTER. Well, it's the last warning. Everybody in the neighborhood's complaining about them and

now they've got just about as far as they're going to get. You've got to keep them off the streets. (*business with tooth*) Do you understand? (*business with tooth*)

MRS. MCG. I will sir. 'Tis a good lambasting both of them will get when I get them home.

REUTER. (*to MRS. DORAY*) She's right about this kid, Mrs. Doray. (*indicates ART.*) He's the toughest nut in town.

ART. What'd I ever do to you?

REUTER. (*business with tooth*) Well, you stole my ice-cream freezer about two months ago.

ART. (*L. c. yells*) I did not!

REUTER. You did too.

MRS. DORAY. How do you know he did?

REUTER. Well, I know it.

MRS. D. Well, how?

REUTER. Well, I have ways of finding out those things, that's all. I had him down in the Juvenile Court, but the judge gave him another chance. I've had my eye on him good ever since. (*to MRS. MCG.*) Remember now, you've got to keep those kids off the streets.

MRS. MCG. (*turning to him*) I will, sir, heaven help me; I'll do the best I can. (*ART. goes up c.*)
MRS. MCG. *finishes drinking. Crosses up R. c.*

REUTER. Sorry I had to butt in on you, Jack. (*looks wistfully at brandy, coughs insinuatingly*) I kinder caught a little cold last night. Guess I got my feet wet.

DORAY. That's all right, Jim, I understand.

MRS. D. (*now at door L.*) Good evening, Mr. Reuter.

REUTER. (*taking the hint—coughs*) Well, I'm sorry I can't stay and visit with you. I'm pretty busy. Good evenin', Mrs. Doray. (*crosses L. D.*)

then to MRS. MCG.) Now be sure and keep them kids off the streets, Mrs. McGuire. The law has spoke. (*business with tooth*) So long, folks. (*exit. ART comes down to L. C.*)

MRS. MCG. (*to ART—now at L. C.*) Now see what you've done, you thievin' little devil you.

MRS. D. Oh, don't talk to the boy like that, Mrs. McGuire. (*crossing down to R. C.*)

MRS. MCG. 'Tis me own business I'm tending to, Mrs. Doray, and I'll thank you to do the same.

MRS. D. Now don't misunderstand me. I——

DORAY. (*interrupts*) Oh, give her what's coming to her, Edie, and let her go. (MRS. DORAY crosses to cup for money)

MRS. MCG. Yes, all I want is the pay for me work, and no advice as to how I'm to conduct the bringing up of me own children.

MRS. D. (R.) You ought to be ashamed of yourself to treat the boy in such a manner. It's enough to break the spirit of any child.

DORAY. Now please Edie, don't interfere. (*annoyed*)

MRS. D. Well, Arthur was just telling me that she cuffs and kicks him from one end of the day to the other. He says he never gets a kind word.

MRS. MCG. (*to ART*) Wait 'till I get you home, you ungrateful little imp! (*shakes fist at him*)

DORAY. You're making it nice for him now.

MRS. D. (*over to MRS. MCG. with money*) Here's your money.

MRS. MCG. 'Tis no gift. God knows I earned it. (*grabs the money. ART goes up C. and glances out of window*)

MRS. D. Why don't you try to be human? The boy's all right if you'll only be fair with him and don't frighten him to death.

DORAY. Now, Edie, please dear! (*business between DORAY and MRS. DORAY*)

MRS. MCG. And since when did you learn the bringing up of children? Sure I don't see any running around this house.

MRS. D. (*crossing to table*) You needn't call for the wash any more; I'm going to give the work to someone who deserves it. (*sits at L. side of table*)

MRS. MCG. As if I cared. (*crossing to door*) There's rags enough to be washed in this world without begging for the chance. (*to ART*) You'll pay for this, you thug-a-mug, you! (*shakes her fist at him*) Wait till I get you home. You'll feel the weight of me hand this night, I'll promise you. (*MRS. DORAY rises*)

ART. Is that so? Well you ain't going to get the chance. You've soaked me for the last time. I'll tell you that right now. And what's more, you've seen me for the last time, too. I'm going to get out of this town tonight. Good-bye, Mrs. Doray. (*jumps through window and runs off L.*)

MRS. MCG. (*goes to window and calls*) Come back here, you little devil. I'll get him and when I do, Lord help him. (*exits door with basket*)

MRS. D. (*looking out of window*) There he goes lickety-split. (*DORAY crosses to R. of window*) Poor kid, I don't blame him. It's a crime the way he's treated. (*goes to R. U. E. and closes door*)

DORAY. Well, you shouldn't have interfered, Edie.

MRS. D. I couldn't help it. The boy may be wild, but he certainly deserves better treatment than he's getting. Oh, I wish I had a lot of money. I'd build a home for just such poor kids as he and give them half-way decent things to eat and wear.

DORAY. (*laughs*) Do you know what I'd do if

I had a lot of money? Spend it all making you happy. (*sits near table L. of table R.*)

MRS. D. I'm so happy now I'm miserable. (*over to him*)

DORAY. Come here to me. (*DORAY pulls MRS. DORAY into his lap and hugs her*)

MRS. D. (*pensively, after slight pause*) You know, dear, I have been thinking.

DORAY. (*playfully satiric*) No!

MRS. D. Yes.

DORAY. (*as before*) What about—me?

MRS. D. (*gravely*) Us.

DORAY. (*as before*) Oh! So serious as all that!

MRS. D. (*sweetly, but seriously*) It is serious, Jack dear. You and I are very very selfish.

DORAY. Oh, come, now, Edee!

MRS. D. Yes, we are. Here we have this cozy little home, you have a good position and so far as we can see the future holds nothing but happiness. Yet what have we done or what are we doing to make others happy? It isn't right, dear. (*DORAY smiles at her seriousness*) Really, dear! We should share our happiness with others. Just think what a home such as this would mean to that poor boy!

DORAY. (*drolly*) Think what it means to me! (*kisses MRS. DORAY*)

MRS. D. But Jack, dear—(*DORAY kisses her again, lovingly and prolongedly. The door bell rings but neither of them hear it. DORAY embraces MRS. DORAY. Door bell rings again. Neither of them hear it. Enter BENNY KING, L. D., carrying a large wicker traveling bag. BENNY is a breezy young com-*

muter. Stops short upon seeing DORAY and MRS. DORAY embracing)

BENNY. Excuse me! I'm in the wrong house!
(starts to exit. MR. and MRS. DORAY break away from each other)

DORAY. Hey, wait a minute! Come back here! What's the matter with you?

BENNY. (laughing, good-naturedly) Home was never like this! (lays hat, crown down L. of telephone table. MRS. DORAY goes up and closes door)

MRS. D. I thought I asked you to bring Mrs. King.

BENNY. (coming down c.) She and Marjorie are playing bridge.

DORAY. Hello, Ben, how are you?

BENNY. Fine.

DORAY. I'd have come over to your house, but—

MRS. D. But I answered the 'phone.

BENNY. (to MRS. DORAY) Thanks. (to DORAY L. of table) I'm glad you didn't come. It gave me a chance to break away. (puts bag on table R.)

DORAY. (referring to the bag) Going some place?

BENNY. (smiling) No, I've just arrived.

DORAY. Then why the bag?

BENNY. That's what I came over to talk to you about.

MRS. D. What, the bag?

BENNY. No, what's in the bag. (crossing to back of table)

DORAY. All right, I'll be the goat. (crossing front of table, to R.) What's in the bag?

BENNY. (proudly) Opportunity.

MRS. D. (puzzled) What?

BENNY. Opportunity. (*begins to unfasten clasps of bag deliberately*)

DORAY. (R.) Say, is this a joke?

BENNY. (*back of table*) You won't think so when you see it.

MRS. D. (*seated at L. of table*) Well, for goodness sake, hurry and tell us! What is it?

BENNY. A business proposition.

DORAY. Just a moment, Benny. BENNY *pauses and looks at DORAY*) If that's a gold brick keep it and sell it to Billy Coombs.

BENNY. (*preparing to open the bag*) It is a great proposition and I am going to split it three ways—you, Billy Coombs, and me.

MRS. D. Do hurry and open it up, Benny. I'm dying to see what it is.

BENNY. (*opens the bag and reveals a fine Barred Plymouth Rock rooster standing on bottom of bag to which he is chained.*) All right, there you are!

(NOTE:—The bag is collapsible and is built in such a way that by unfastening a clasp on each upper corner of the bag, the sides fall flat on the table. The sides and ends are hinged to the bottom, and the clasps are near the handle)

DORAY. Wow! Gee, that's a bird!

BENNY. What did you think it was?

MRS. D. Oh, what a beautiful rooster!

BENNY. Beautiful! A government mint on two legs.

DORAY. Where did you get him?

BENNY. Bought him this afternoon at the poultry show, and believe me, he's worth the price. (*stroking the rooster's back*) Look at him. Isn't he a work of art?

DORAY. He certainly is.

BENNY. There's a small fortune in that little bird.

MRS. D. Really?

BENNY. Surest thing you know! And the sooner we begin the sooner we'll get the fortune. That's why I brought the bird over here tonight. I want to begin the first thing tomorrow morning, and I want Jack to go in with me.

DORAY. In where?

BENNY. In the chicken business.

DORAY. (*laughing sarcastically*) No, thanks.

BENNY. Now wait a minute, Jack. You don't realize the possibilities of this proposition.

DORAY. Yes, I do—that's exactly why I'm going to keep out. (*crosses to L.*)

BENNY. (*follows DORAY to c.* MRS. DORAY *sits R. of table*) But I want you to come in. Listen: you have good chickens, Billy Coombs has good chickens, I have good chickens. We can combine our flocks, rent a vacant lot, and inside of a year double our money.

DORAY. When it comes to raising chickens, Benny, I prefer to let my money remain single.

BENNY. All right. Opportunity knocked and you slammed the door in his face. (*closing the bag*) Come on, Oppy, our next stop is Billy Coombs'!

DORAY. (*as BENNY starts toward door L.*) Why don't you wait here for Billy? He's coming over to play cards. He'll be here in a minute.

MRS. DORAY. Yes, he phoned he'd be right over.

BENNY. That settles it, Oppy! We'll stay.
(*Children's voices heard laughing and jeering off R. U. L. It is kept up until COOMBS passes near window, followed by a crowd of children, yelling and shouting.*)

DORAY. (*surprised and curious*) Hello, what's

that? (*runs to rear window. BENNY puts bag on floor up R. MRS. D. crosses to door L.*)

COOMBS. (*loudly, off R.U.*) I've got you this time, you little imps!

MRS. D. Mercy! What on earth!

BENNY. That sounds like Billy now.

DORAY. (*looking out rear window*) It is Billy.

BENNY. I'll bet he's having trouble with those kids again.

MRS. D. Poor children.

DORAY. Poor Billy. (*COOMBS passes rear window from R., leading PATSY MCGUIRE by the arm on one side of him, and CASSIE MCGUIRE by the arm on the other side. The children are tugging back as COOMBS pulls them along. A crowd of children are following*)

PATSY. (*as they pass in front of rear window*)
Le' me go!

CASSIE. We didn't do it!

CHILDREN. Let 'em go! They didn't do it! Let 'em go!

CASSIE. Leave us go, Mister!

PATSY. We didn't do it, honest we didn't!

COOMBS. (*now off L.*) Open the door!

BENNY. Great Scott, he's bringing them in here. (*MRS. DORAY opens door. COOMBS enters with PATSY and CASSIE, and the gang of children crowd into door. MRS. DORAY motions them to leave room. The gang exits but TOMMY, a cute boy of five remains. COOMBS is a little man of forty, crotchety, pepperish, quick-tempered, but likeable. He has a kind heart, but seldom shows it. He wears a business suit, is bareheaded, and very angry. MRS. DORAY closes the door*)

COOMBS. (*entering with PATSY and CASSIE*)
I've caught 'em at last, Jack. Here they are—Mrs.

McGuire's two little angels. Look at them! (*now at C.*)

PATSY. (*to COOMBS on his right.*) Le' me go.

CASSIE. We didn't do it. (*L. of him*)

DORAY. (*smiling*) What's the matter, Billy, were they trying to rob you?

COOMBS. (*indignant*) No, they stretched a wire across the sidewalk and I fell over it. (*so angry that he is funny*) And I darn near broke my neck! (*BENNY and DORAY laugh, MRS. DORAY smiles broadly*)

COOMBS. (*furiously sarcastic, as he glares at BENNY*) Funny, isn't it? (*PATSY and CASSIE giggle at COOMBS' anger. COOMBS looks at them*) Oh, you think it's funny, too, eh? Well, I'll just waltz you down to the police station, my young friends.

MRS. D. Oh, now, Mr. COOMBS! (*COOMBS pauses and looks at her. She smiles and goes to him*) You surely wouldn't have these children arrested. (*Takes TOMMY and CASSIE by the hands*)

BENNY. Of course not! (*takes PATSY from COOMBS*)

MRS. D. (*coming down to rocking chair with PATSY and TOMMY*) The way to handle children is thru kindness.

BENNY. (*crossing with PATSY*) Absolutely!

COOMBS. They didn't show me any kindness when I fell over that wire. They laughed at me!

PATSY. We didn't put that wire there, did we, Cassie?

CASSIE. No.

COOMBS. (*angrily to PATSY*) Who did? (*to CASSIE*) Art Simpson? (*PATSY pantomimes CASSIE to say "Yes."* PATSY nods his head and shakes his fist at her)

CASSIE. Yes.

MRS. D. Poor Arthur! (*sits in rocker—CASSIE above her, TOMMY below*)

COOMBS. What?

MRS. D. That poor boy's blamed for everything.

COOMBS. He should be. He is to blame for everything that's mean and devilish. The little bum.

DORAY. (*to CASSIE*) Mr. Reuter says that you and Patsy threw stones at Mr. Wilson's grocery store.

CASSIE. We did not. We just threw some dirt.

PATSY. (*to DORAY*) Jim Reuter better keep his nose out of our business.

COOMBS. What is your business?

PATSY. That's *my* business.

MRS. D. Why did you throw dirt at Mr. Wilson's grocery store?

CASSIE. Aw, we asked him to give us a piece of cake and he said he'd wallop us in the jaw.

MRS. D. Dear, dear, dear!

PATSY. If he ever wallops her in the jaw I'll bust him in the nose.

DORAY. My but you're a bad man, aren't you?

TOMMY. You bet he is!

CASSIE. Patsy hit a boy twice his size the other day, didn't you Patsy?

PATSY. You bet you.

COOMBS. Say, a rough guy like you ought to be locked up.

CASSIE. (*pulling his coat*) Oh, please mister, don't lock him up, he'll be good. (*to PATSY.*) Won't you Patsy?

PATSY. Sure.

COOMBS. Well, I'll let you go this time. But look out, next time I'll have you sent to jail for life.

PATSY. (*taking CASSIE's and TOMMY's hands*) Come on kids, let's beat it. (*they skip up L.*)

MRS. D. Children. (*the kids pause. Mrs. D. goes to them*) How do you know it was Arthur Simpson who strung the wire that Mr. Coombs fell over?

CASSIE. (*hesitates. She is lying*) 'Cause—'cause we seed him do it. Didn't we, Patsy?

PATSY. Sure we did. (*crosses and opens door*)

COOMBS. (*savagely, as he paces across the room*) Jack, if I ever catch that kid—OUCH! (*stops, puts hand on his hip and screws up his face in pain. PATSY and CASSIE giggle at him*)

MRS. D. (*to COOMBS, sympathetically*) Oh!

DORAY. Are you hurt?

BENNY. Yes, Billy, are you?

COOMBS. (*sarcastically*) No, I'm dancing the Lame Duck!

PATSY. (*impishly*) Good 'nuff for you, you big toad!

COOMBS. (*savagely to PATSY*) What! (*PATSY, CASSIE and TOMMY run off L. laughing*) Wait till I get you again, you little sardines!

CASSIE. (*saucily; as she and PATSY and TOMMY appear at rear window outside*) We put the wire acrost th' sidewalk, and we'll do it again, you big horse-fly.

COOMBS. (*dashes toward rear window. CASSIE screams and the three kids run off R. COOMBS stops short, holding hand to his hip; in pain, but funny*) O! Ooooooooo! Horsefly!

DORAY. Is there anything we can do to help you, Billy?

COOMBS. Yes, 'phone Jim Reuter to arrest Art Simpson and chuck him in jail. (*comes down c.*)

MRS. D. (*crossing to rocking-chair*) Arthur will probably be in jail soon enough without any of us sending him there.

COOMBS. So he ought to be. That kid is a born criminal and the sooner he's behind the bars the better.

DORAY. (*at buffet getting playing cards*) What do you want to play, Billy, pitch or pinochle? (BENNY gets rooster bag from chair)

COOMBS. Rum.

DORAY. (*to BENNY as COOMBS sits L. of table MRS. DORAY begins to sew*) How does that suit you, Benny?

BENNY. (*going to second table*) Fine! Anything that suits Billy suits me. (*puts rooster bag on table*) But before we begin the game, Billy, I have something here I want to show you.

COOMBS. I'm in no mood to see it.

BENNY. (*L. of table R.*) You will be after you see it. (*as he unfastens clasp of bag*) This bag contains the greatest little joy-bringer that ever smiled on a terrestrial hemisphere.

COOMBS. I don't believe it.

BENNY. I'm going to convince you. (*exhibits rooster bag*) It's a thorough-bred Plymouth Rock rooster.

COOMBS. (*disgusted*) Suffering Caesar! What are you doing with that thing in the house?

BENNY. (*slapping COOMBS on the back*) Billy, there's a fortune in this little fowl, and I want you to be my partner in the chicken business.

COOMBS. I wouldn't be your partner in any business.

BENNY. But why?

COOMBS. You're always grinning! You're so darn good-natured you make me tired. (*peevishly, to DORAY*) Say, are we going to play cards, or are we not? (BENNY puts rooster bag on chair up R. door bell rings).

COOMBS. Come in. (*to MRS. DORAY*) Excuse me, I thought I was home.

ROMNEY. (*enters from L.*) Hello, everybody!
(*ROMNEY is an amiable Romeo boy of 22, typically suburban*)

DORAY. (*rising*) Hello, Romney! Just in time for a good game. Draw up a chair and join us.

BENNY. (*at second table, where he is placing rooster bag*) Yes, Romney, join us.

ROMNEY. Thank you, boys, but I haven't time this evening.

COOMBS. (*brusquely*) Come on, sit down. You don't have to see that girl of yours every night.

ROMNEY. No, but—

COOMBS. Oh, I know what you're going to say; you don't have to but you want to. We used to be that way. (*to DORAY and BENNY, all three men are now seated at table*) Didn't we, boys? (*To ROMNEY*) Six months before we were married we couldn't see enough of our wives. Six months after we were married—(*As BENNY kicks his leg under the table*) Ouch! Damn! (*Apologetically, to MRS. D.*) I beg your pardon. (*To BENNY—under his breath*) What's the idea—on the corn like that?

ROMNEY. Now, Billy, if you're through talking, I'll explain why I dropped in here this evening.

COOMBS. (*Testily*) Go on—explain—I won't stop you. (*Instantly—to DORAY*) Whose play is it?

DORAY. Yours.

COOMBS. All right. (*Slaps card on table*) There you are. Jump on it and tear it to pieces. (*Turns to ROMNEY*) Go on, what are you waiting for?

BENNY. (*Drily, as he plays cards*) He's waiting for you to breathe, Billy.

COOMBS. (*To Romney*) All right—I'm breathing now—shoot it out!

ROMNEY. (*The three men play cards during the following*) What are you boys planning to do on Decoration Day?

COOMBS. Sleep.

ROMNEY. Very well, then *you're* accounted for. (*To DORAY*) Jack, what are you going to do?

DORAY. Oh, nothing in particular. Late breakfast, early dinner, and then go to the ball game.

ROMNEY. (*smiling*) I have a better scheme than that.

COOMBS. (*satirically*) Yes, and if I remember rightly, you had a better scheme last Decoration Day, too. A croquet tournament—the men against the women.

MRS. D. (*Smiling*) And if I remember rightly, the women won, didn't they?

COOMBS. Yes, and they've been cackling over it ever since.

BENNY. (*Defending the women*) Why shouldn't they cackle?

COOMBS. (*To BENNY, disgusted and disgruntled*) Oh, say——!

DORAY. What is your scheme, Romney?

ROMNEY. Well, I thought it MIGHT be fun to go fishing.

COOMBS. (*Ironically*) Might is right. I've never had any fun yet fishing.

BENNY. I have.

DORAY. So have I.

ROMNEY. (*To BENNY and DORAY*) Then you'll go?

BENNY. Where?

ROMNEY. Bass Lake.

COOMBS. (*Cynically*) Bass Lake! There hasn't been a fish there big enough to eat since George Washington crossed the Delaware and Lackawanna.

DORAY. (*to ROMNEY, showing interest*) Are they biting well?

ROMNEY. Fine! Marjorie's father caught six beauties yesterday.

BENNY. (*Delighted*) Six in less than an hour!

DORAY. That settles it. I know where I'm going to spend Decoration Day.

BENNY. Oh, you black bass! (*he and DORAY pantomime reeling a fish*)

COOMBS. (*Sarcastically to BENNY*) Oh, you poor weakling. There aren't any black bass or any other kind of bass in Bass Lake. That's why they call it Bass Lake—there's no bass there. (*BENNY, who has risen, sits down disgusted.*)

ROMNEY. (*To DORAY*) Well, will you go?

DORAY. You bet I will!

ROMNEY. Good. Then we'll just have a nice little party of six.

DORAY and BENNY. (*Puzzled*) Six?

COOMBS. Who are the other two?

ROMNEY. (*To COOMBS*) The other three. (*To DORAY*) Mrs. Doray. (*to BENNY*) Mrs. King—and Marjorie.

DORAY and BENNY. Oh! (*Disappointed*)

COOMBS. (*Sensitively*) Where am I coming in?

ROMNEY. I didn't know you were.

COOMBS. (*Peeved*) All right. I thought maybe you wanted me.

ROMNEY. We do, but——

COOMBS. (*Interrupting, peeved, ironical*) Yes, you do, BUT——(*Flings cards on table, shoves chair back, rises and starts towards L. I. BENNY and DORAY jump up and follow him.*)

BENNY. (*Laying his hand on COOMBS' arm*) Now, Billy, don't get—

DORAY. (*Interrupting*) Romney would have invited you. Billy, but you said you were going to sleep.

ROMNEY. Yes, Billy, you said you were going to—

COOMBS. (*Tersely*) I know I said it, but I've changed my mind.

BENNY. *Bully!* (*Goes back of table and resumes seat at R. of table*)

ROMNEY. (*Delighted*) Now we'll have a nice little party of eight.

COOMBS. (*Curious and disturbed*) Eight?

ROMNEY. Yes. We six and you and Mrs. Coombs.

COOMBS. Oh! are you going to take *her* along?

ROMNEY. Certainly. (*Coombs betrays his disappointment*) Of course, if you don't want—

COOMBS. (*Hopelessly, as he picks up his cards*) All right, I don't care—take her.

DORAY. Why certainly, we'll be glad to have her.

MRS. D. Well, I should say so.

COOMBS. (*to MRS. DORAY; as if apologizing*) It isn't my wife I object to, it's Pinto.

MRS. D. (*Puzzled*) Pinto?

COOMBS. Yes, Pinto—a little good-for-nothing, stub-nose, long-haired, fuzzy-faced, egotistical, cowardly, squeaky-voiced poodle dog.

BENNY. Where did you get him?

COOMBS. I didn't—he was sent to us.

DORAY. Who did it?

COOMBS. My wife's mother—express collect—and a case of dog medicine to doctor him with. (*To MRS. DORAY, as he rises*) Excuse me, MRS. DORAY, but every time I think of that confounded poodle, it makes me so mad that I've simply got to get up and walk the floor. (*paces rapidly, but limpingly back and forth*) No man likes dogs more than I do, that is,

dogs that are dogs—Mastiffs, St. Bernards, Newfoundland, Collies, Spaniels, Boston Bulls, English Bulls, Fox Terriers, Skye Terriers, Pointers, Setters, Stag hounds, Greyhounds, Dashhounds, Pot hounds, Fish hounds, and all the other kinds of hounds—but a 14-oz. toy poodle that's all fluff and feathers and has a falsetto bark. (*pauses a moment*) That kind of dog isn't a dog—he's a chorus girl's companion. (*goes over R. to above his chair R. of table*)

DORAY. When did Pinto arrive?

COOMBS. Day before yesterday, and there hasn't been a peaceful moment in our house since. The minute he stops whining or barking or snoring, my wife begins nagging me to give him a dog biscuit, or a bath or take him out for some exercise or fetch him back and shake some bug dust on him. Not only that—at night he sleeps in a cradle right next to my bed! And if he cries in the night I've got to get up and rock him.

ROMNEY. Well, Billy, you can take Pinto with you.

COOMBS. Aw, Pinto.

ROOMAY. Anyhow it's settled, isn't it, that eight of us will spend Decoration Day at Bass Lake?

DORAY. You bet you.

BENNY. And the earlier we start the longer we can fish.

ROMNEY. How does 7 o'clock strike you?

BENNY. Fine!

COOMBS. Make it 9.

DORAY. Compromise at 8.

ROMNEY. Eight it is.

DORAY. And everybody ready on the minute.

ROMNEY. You bet!

COOMBS. (*Sarcastically*) How are we going to get there—walk?

ROMNEY. A friend of mine has offered to lend me

his car. (*To DORAY*) I'm sorry, Jack, but I must be hurrying along. Good-night. (*DORAY and MRS. DORAY accompany him to L. D.*)

DORAY. Good night, Romney.

ROMNEY. Good night, Mrs. Doray. So long, Benny. Good night, Billy. (*as he gets near L. door*) Marjorie will be tickled to death when I tell her where we're going and what we're going to do. She simply loves to fish. Good night, BILLY. (*Exits L.*)

COOMBS. Good night! (*After ROMNEY'S exit DORAY crosses to table; MRS. D. in rocker*) Romney's a nice boy, but he's like everyone else when they're in love—a public nuisance.

BENNY. I don't agree with you, BILLY. I don't think he's a public nuisance.

COOMBS. I do! The idea of his coming in here and breaking up a perfectly good game of rum simply to make us go clear out to Bass Lake, so that he and his girl can go fishing together.

MRS. DORAY. (*Seated in rocker now*) Maybe Marjorie likes fish.

COOMBS. All right, if she's so dog-gone fond of fish why don't he take her down to the fish market and buy her one?

DORAY. (*as they pick up cards*) Whose play is it?

COOMBS. Hanged if I know.

BENNY. It's your play Jack.

(*Tick-tack, ready*)

DORAY. Is it? (*the men play. MRS. D. hums and sews. Pause. A tick tack is heard on L. window. The men stop and listen. COMEDY PAUSE*)

BENNY. What's that?

DORAY. It sounds like a tick tack. (*The noise continues*) (*The men listen*)

COOMBS. It is a tick tack. (*Jumps to his feet. Shrill whistles off L.*) Art Simpson and his gang are here! (*Excitedly*) I'm going to catch that kid if its the last act of my life! (*rises and starts angrily toward L. D.*) (*Phone rings.*)

DORAY. (*rises and follows COOMBS towards L. D.*) And I'm going to help you.

BENNY. Now hold on, Boys!

DORAY. Answer the phone, BILLY.

COOMBS. (*in phone*) Hello! Mr. King? (*to BENNY*) It's for you.

BENNY. Me? Who can be phoning me here? (*takes up receiver in L. hand; transmitter in R. hand*) Hello! —Burglars?

COOMBS, DORAY and MRS. D. Burglars!

BENNY. (*in phone*) I see! . . . All right, dear, just crawl under the bed and keep still. (*hangs up receiver*)

DORAY. (*to BENNY*) What's the idea?

BENNY. Those boys are over at my house, too. (*laughing*)

COOMBS. Send for the police.

BENNY. Not on your life! They've broken up a game of bridge that's been going on in my house all day. (*loud whistle off L.*)

COOMBS. There they are again!

DORAY. Come on, Billy!

MRS. D. Wait! Let me deal with the boys.

DORAY. Now, Edith——

MRS. D. I'll get them to go away.

COOMBS. (*cynically*) How?

DORAY. Yes, Edie, how?

MRS. D. By giving them each a nice big piece of cocoanut pie.

BENNY. Bully!

COOMBS. I'll give them something stronger than pie. (*starts for L. door*)

BENNY. Just a moment, Billy. (COOMBS *stops*. To MRS. DORAY) I will take charge of the boys, Mrs. Doray.

MRS. D. Thank you, Benny, but—

BENNY. (*smiling wisely*. To COOMBS) I understand boys perfectly and I know exactly how to handle them.

COOMBS. (*caustically*) So do I! Come on, Jack. We'll handle them! (*starts towards L. D.*)

DORAY. (*following*) You bet we will. (BENNY *stops* COOMBS)

BENNY. (*wisely to COOMBS*) Children should be ruled by kindness, Billy, not by force. (*as he goes to L. door*) I shall speak to them. (*exits L.*)

MRS. D. (*calls off to BENNY*) Tell them to come in and have some cocoanut pie.

DORAY. (*flabbergasted*) Edith!

MRS. D. (*to DORAY*) There's a cocoanut pie in the pantry, dear, won't you please—

DORAY. Now look here, Edie—

MRS. D. Very well, I'll get it myself. (*starts for R. U.*)

DORAY. (*stopping her*) I'll get it, Edie, but I think you're making a mistake.

COOMBS. Of course she is! What that kid needs is a club.

BOYS. (*off stage*) Soak him! That's the stuff! Soak him! Soak him!

MRS. D. Mercy!

DORAY. (*as MRS. DORAY rushes up to L.*) There you are!

COOMBS. See, what did I tell you!

MRS. D. (*horrified at what she sees*) Oh! (*pandemonium outside; children laughing and jeer-*

ing and whistling. BENNY enters, his shoulders covered with flour)

COOMBS. (*cynically cordial*) Greetings, Androcles!

BENNY. Shut up! (*slams the door shut*)

MRS. D. (*staring at BENNY*) Did those boys do that?

BENNY. (*coming down c.*) They did! They bombarded me with flour bombs.

DORAY. Flour bombs!

BENNY. Yes. (*exhibiting small paper bag filled with flour and tied at one end with piece of string*) Here's one. The first one they flung.

DORAY. (*taking the bomb*) The ingenious little devils!

COOMBS. (*looking at the bomb*) Art Simpson made that. Let me see it. (*takes the bomb, looks at it and, during following, puts it on telephone table*)

DORAY. (*playfully satirical, to MRS. DORAY*) Now shall I bring the pie, dear?

MRS. D. Yes. (*starts L.*)

BENNY. (*to DORAY who is dazed by his wife's reply*) Bring a horse whip.

COOMBS. (*to BENNY*) Shake!

MRS. D. Jack, get that pie!

DORAY. (*exiting pantry*) Oh, Edie——

MRS. D. (*kindly—as she exits L.*) Boys, oh boys!

COOMBS. (*starting after MRS. DORAY*) Can you beat that! (*shrill whistle off L.*)

MRS. D. (*off stage L.*) Don't run, I won't hurt you!

BOYS. (*off stage L.*) Sure you won't. You can't catch us!

COOMBS. Hear that? I'll teach him to insult a

woman! The impudent little puppy! (*grabs BENNY'S hat from window-seat and rushes off L.*)

MRS. D. (*off stage L.*) Mr. Coombs, STOP! Mr. Coombs!

BOYS. (*off L.*) Look out, here comes the old buck! (*a gang dash past rear window from L. to R. going at full speed, yelling, shouting and whistling. As they dash past the window*) Here he comes! Beat it, beat it! (*as the boys get out of sight COOMBS comes running along from D. As he gets off R. a boy yells*) There he is! Soak him, soak him! That's the stuff! Soak him again! Soak him again! (*BENNY rushes up to rear window*)

DORAY. (*entering from R. U. with pie*) What's up?

BENNY. They're soaking Billy.

DORAY. The deuce they are! (*as he rushes down to R. table and puts pie on it*) Stay with 'em, Billy, stay with 'em!

BENNY. (*standing on window seat*) Come here, Billy! Come here! Come here! (*DORAY puts pie on table and runs to window. COOMBS is now in front of window and the men are trying to pull him in. The flour bombs are raining upon them from R. side of the stage. Both men are fighting blindly to ward off the bombs*)

MRS. D. (*enters from L.*) What on earth! (*the kids are now in front of the window, peppering the men with flour bombs*)

BENNY and DORAY. (*to COOMBS*) Quick! Pull him in! Come in, Billy! Hurry! Hurry! (*etc., etc. They pull COOMBS thru window into room*)

MRS. D. Benny, shut the window! (*BENNY and DORAY drive the children away from the window then close the windows quickly, and look at COOMBS, who is a mass of flour from head to foot*)

COOMBS. (*coming down c.*) Jack, I was never so near death in my life.

DORAY. (*coming down*) You do look pale, Billy.

BENNY. (*coming down*) You've got on my hat.

COOMBS. How did I get that on?

DORAY. Are you hurt?

COOMBS. No, but it wasn't their fault, the little thugs!

MRS. D. Jack, get the whisk broom.

DORAY. All right, Edie. (*goes to buffet and opens drawer*)

COOMBS. A whisk broom won't do any good. I'm full of the stuff.

MRS. D. (*to DORAY*) Never mind the broom, dear, use the vacuum cleaner.

DORAY. That's a good idea! (*hands BENNY the whisk broom taken from buffet drawer, then hastens to vacuum cleaner, and during the following removes cleaning rod from hose, puts brush on hose and carries vacuum cleaner over to MRS. DORAY. COOMBS begins wiping his face with his handkerchief. BENNY begins brushing himself*)

MRS. D. (*sympathetically*) I'm sorry this happened, boys.

COOMBS. (*satirically*) Thanks.

MRS. D. (*with a tolerant little smile such as a mother gives a child*) Of course you know you men have no one but yourselves to blame for this.

COOMBS and BENNY. What!

MRS. D. You realize that it is all your own fault?

COOMBS. (*flabbergasted*) OUR fault!

MRS. D. (*smiling*) Surely!

BENNY. What do you know about that, Jack?

DORAY. (*coming downstage*) About what?

COOMBS. Your wife blames us for that fight with the kids. (*MRS. D. begins cleaning COOMBS' clothes*)

with the vacuum cleaner. He turns back to audience; she cleans his coat, then runs the cleaning brush over his hair. Comedy business by COOMBS during this scene. DORAY is cleaning BENNY with whisk broom. The following lines are spoken as they clean up)

DORAY. What you say about the boys of this town is all very true, Edie, but you must remember they are not our boys.

BENNY. Of course they aren't.

COOMBS. Let their parents raise them.

MRS. D. Arthur Simpson hasn't any parents.

DORAY. He has an aunt.

BENNY. Why doesn't she look after him?

MRS. D. She has children of her own—and besides, she doesn't like the boy.

DORAY. Can you blame her?

COOMBS. The ornery little rat!

BENNY. Nobody likes him.

MRS. D. That is just the trouble—nobody likes him. He is a poor, friendless, homeless little orphan and everybody is against him.

COOMBS. Why shouldn't they be against him?

DORAY. He's always doing something mean.

MRS. D. But think what he will be when he grows up!

BENNY. He isn't worth thinking about.

MRS. D. If that boy thinks that no one likes him he will become a mean, sour, cynical man.

DORAY. Oh, fiddlesticks!

COOMBS. Look at me! No one liked me when I was a boy. Am I sour? Am I cynical? No, sir! I tell you, Mr. Doray, it isn't the way we're treated that counts—it's the stuff that's in us—in us! (*to DORAY and BENNY*) Isn't that right, boys? (*COOMBS is now cleaned and DORAY stops the vacuum cleaner*

motor and carries it back to its place. During following the men return to table and resume card game. MRS. DORAY returns to rocking chair and resumes sewing)

BENNY. Absolutely!

DORAY. Yes, sir-ee Bob!

MRS. D. There's good stuff in Arthur Simpson.

COOMBS. Who says so?

MRS. D. I do. His mother used to work for my mother. She was our cook for years and years and we were very fond of her. She was a good woman.

DORAY. Then why hasn't the boy amounted to something, dear?

MRS. D. He hasn't had a chance.

COOMBS. Chance poppycock!

BENNY. He's had as much chance as other boys.

DORAY. Of course he has.

COOMBS. The kid hasn't got it in him, that's all.

MRS. D. How do you know he hasn't?

COOMBS. (*not understanding*) Eh?

MRS. D. What proof have you that Arthur Simpson is not made of good stuff?

COOMBS. The best proof in the world!

MRS. D. What is it?

COOMBS. He steals chickens—and I claim that anyone who will steal a poor, innocent, helpless, defenseless chicken is capable of doing anything.

—MRS. D. How do you know he steals chickens?

COOMBS. Because he stole some of mine.

MRS. D. How do you know it was he?

COOMBS. Jack, if the women of this state ever get the vote you want to put your wife up for District Attorney. (*to Mrs. D.*) When it comes to cross examination, you have all the lawyers of the world lashed to the mast.

BENNY. If you ever *are* up for office, Mrs. Doray,

I know one vote you'll get. (*picks up cocoanut pie*)

MRS. D. Thank you, Benny.

BENNY. Lend me your knife, Jack.

COOMBS. Here, use mine. I feel just like eating a piece of that pie myself. (*takes knife from pocket and offers it to BENNY*)

MRS. D. (*rising*) Never mind, I will get a knife and some plates from the kitchen. (*going to kitchen door*) But remember, Mr. Coombs, the boys of to-day are the men of tomorrow. (*exit*)

COOMBS. Say, Jack, what's getting into your wife anyway?

DORAY. Never you mind about my wife—she's all right.

COOMBS. She didn't used to talk that way. Has she been reading a lot of this Ben Lindsay junk?

BENNY. You mean the —

COOMBS. Aw, this juvenile court truck—conservation of children—being a big brother to some dirty little brat that'll turn around and rob you the first chance he gets and then swat you back of the head with a brick-bat. That kind of tommyrot looks nice in print—makes fine reading for the women—but you take it from me, Jack, if a man's wife reads that junk and takes it seriously, it's going to make the grand old tune of Home Sweet Home sound like a battle song. (*BENNY and DORAY laugh*) You don't believe me, eh? Well, it's the truth just the same. That's why every time my wife asks me to get her something to read I buy her a popular novel—something interesting but light—light!

DORAY. It's your play. (*men resume playing*)

(*After count of five, chickens off rear squawk, loud and as if terrified*)

COOMBS. Listen! (*rises and goes L.*) Hear that?

They're stealing your chickens! Jack! They're stealing your chickens!

DORAY. (*rises, also BENNY*) My God! and they're just big enough to eat! (*goes upstage L.*)

BENNY. Shall I call Reuter?

COOMBS. Hang Reuter! We'll catch them ourselves.

DORAY. Come on, Billy! (*goes L.*)

COOMBS. (*to BENNY*) You stay here and keep Mrs. Doray from tipping them off.

BENNY. But I want to——

DORAY. Never mind what you want. If my wife finds out we are after those kids——. (*to COOMBS*) You go that way —(*points to L. door*)—and I'll go this. (*points to window L.*) Then one of us is sure to catch them.

COOMBS. All right, hurry. (*exits L. door. DORAY exits thru L. window*)

MRS. D. (*enters from kitchen with knife and plates*) My goodness, what's all that noise?

BENNY. It sounds like the chickens.

MRS. KING. (*enters from L. followed by MARJORIE. They dash on*) For Heaven's sake, Benny!

BENNY. Now what's happened?

MRS. KING. The burglars are stealing our chickens!

BENNY. Why didn't you phone? (*grabs chicken bag*)

MRS. K. I did, hours ago, and you wouldn't come.

BENNY. You never mentioned the *chickens*. You said the burglars were in the house. (*grabs hat and exits L.*)

MRS. K. The idea! Benny telling me to crawl under the bed! What he needs is a good talking to, and he's going to get it. (*starts L.*) Come on Marjie, I'll talk to him!

COOMBS. (*off stage*) There he goes, Jack, there he goes! Catch him, catch him!

MRS. D. Oh!

MARJORIE. What is it?

COOMBS. (*off stage*) Hold him, Jack, hold him! (*bedlam off stage*)

MRS. K. (*as MRS. D. runs to window and throws it open*) What is it?

MARJORIE. What's the matter?

MRS. D. Mr. Coombs! Mr. Coombs! (*exits L.*)

MRS. KING. Oh, Marjorie, I never spent such a night in my life!

MARJORIE. Neither did I!

MRS. K. Phone for the police and ask them to take us home! I won't venture out of this house without an officer on each side of me and two behind!

COOMBS. (*off stage L.*) No, you don't, you little devil! We caught you his time and we're going to keep you.

MARJORIE. What on earth——!

COOMBS. (*off stage*) Look out for the dog, Jack! Kick him! (*enters from L. holding ART. DORAY enters with COOMBS, each man has hold of one of ART'S arms. MRS. DORAY follows*) Come on here, you little thief. I'll teach you to steal chickens.

DORAY. (*at c. front*) There you are, Edie—I hope you believe now that everything his aunt said about him was true. There's your little Lord Fauntleroy!

MRS. D. Mr. Coombs, don't handle him so roughly.

COOMBS. No, kiss him, I suppose. (*to ART.*) You dear little child, I'll kiss you! (*to DORAY*) Phone for Jim Reuter. He's the man to take charge of this little gangster.

MRS. D. Mr. Coombs will you please take your hands off that boy?

COOMBS. I'll take my hands off him, but I'll keep my eyes on him. (*shoves ART away from him to R.*)

DORAY. (*in phone*) Hello, give me the police station, please.

MRS. D. (*up to DORAY*) Jack, please don't call the police,—please don't.

COOMBS. (*up to R. of DORAY*) We caught him dead to rights—rooster in one hand and hen in the other. (*to DORAY*) Send for a cop and send for him quick.

DORAY. (*in phone*) Hello—Police station?

MRS. D. Don't Jack, please don't!

DORAY. (*in phone*) Send an officer to 97 Orchard Street at once.

MARJORIE. Tell them to send two—one for us.

MRS. KING. Yes, Jack, make it two. We need one—make it two. Make it two!

DORAY. Sh! Sh! (*in phone*) 97 Orchard Street. . . We've caught a thief.

MRS. K. Make it two, Jack, make it two.

DORAY. Sh! (*in phone*) And say chief, make it two—one for the thief and one for my neighbors. (*hangs up receiver*)

COOMBS. (*to ART*) Well, my young friend, your career as a criminal is just about ended.

MRS. D. You poor child! (*to COOMBS*) You mean his career as a criminal is just about to begin.

ART. (*quickly and softly—close to MRS. DORAY*) I didn't know they were your chickens, Mrs. Doray.

MRS. D. (*sympathetically*) I'm awful sorry! (*turns to women*) Won't you be seated?

DORAY. (*brings chair from R.*) Here you are, Marjorie. (*MARJORIE and MRS. K. sit L.*)

COOMBS. (to ART) Sit down! (*pushes him into chair*)

MRS. D. Mr. Coombs, I insist that you treat that boy with——

COOMBS. He has it coming to him and he's going to get it—and he's going to get it strong. (*quickly to ART.*) Say, what did you mean by stretching that wire across the sidewalk?

ART. What wire?

COOMBS. Don't play innocent—you know what wire!

MRS. D. Mr. Coombs———!

DORAY. (*picking up flour bomb from telephone table and coming down to ART*) And I don't suppose you know what this is, either?

ART. No, what is it?

COOMBS (*sarcastically*) "What is it!"

MRS. D. (*as DORAY takes flour bomb back to table*) Arthur—(*he looks up at her*) Would you like a piece of cocoanut pie?

DORAY. Oh! (*turns away, disgusted*)

COOMBS. Now look here, Mrs. Doray——!

MRS. D. Billy Coombs, if you please! (*to ART*) You like pie, don't you?

ART. Yeh.

COOMBS. If you can't talk like a gentleman keep your mouth shut. And don't look at me in that tone of voice, understand. (*ART makes a break for door L.*) Stop him, Jack, stop him. (*DORAY at L. D. grabs ART*)

MRS. D. Don't hurt him, Jack, don't hurt him!

COOMBS. Jack, take the women outside. I'm going to give this kid a darned good licking. (*peels off his coat*)

MRS. D. If Jack takes anyone outside, Mr. Coombs, it will be you.

COOMBS. That's right, blame it on me.

MRS. D. Here, Arthur. Here's your piece of pie. (*hands ART the pie*) Would you like a glass of milk?

ART. Yes, ma'am! (*dog barks off stage L.*) (To DORAY) Open that door!

DORAY. Why?

ART. I want Jasper.

COOMBS. Who's Jasper, one of your gang?

ART. I ain't got no gang.

MRS. D. Who is Jasper?

ART. My dog. (*to DORAY as the dog barks again*) Open that door, will you? Can't you hear him calling me?

MRS. D. I'll let him in.

COOMBS. (*as MRS. D. goes to door*) Yes, let him in. That dog tried to bite me when we were catching this kid. I'm going to give him a good kick in the jaw.

ART. If you ever kick my dog I'll kill you.

MARJORIE. (*crossing to R. of table*) My goodness!

MRS. K. (*crossing after MARJORIE*) Gracious!

COOMBS. (*to MRS. DORAY*) Now what kind of stuff do you think the little fellow is made of, Mrs. Doray?

MRS. K. What would your mother think if she heard you say this?

ART. I ain't got no mother.

MARJORIE. Well, what would your father think?

ART. I ain't got no father.

DORAY. (*crossing toward him from upper left*) Well, you've got an aunt—what would she say?

ART. Say, what is this—the third degree? (*dog barks.* MRS. D. opens door; the DOG enters) Hello Jasper! (*offers him the pie*) Here's what I called

you in for, a nice big hunk of cocoanut pie. (*patrol effect L.*) Eat it quick, the cops are coming. Don't be afraid of them guys; I won't let them hurt you. You ain't hurt, are you? (*to COOMBS and DORAY*) Say did any of you guys hurt my dog when he was tryin' to help me get away? Did you? Did you? (*enter JIM REUTER and NELS LARSEN, another policeman, L. D.*)

DORAY. Hello, Jim.

REUTER. Hello, Jack, what's the trouble? (*sees ART down R. C.*) Oh, I see! Little Artie, the boy wonder, eh?

COOMBS. Yes, we've got him at last, Jim.

REUTER. 'Bout time someone was gettin' him. (*down to ART*) Well, what have you got to say for yourself? (*no reply from ART*) The same talkative little boy he always was. (*to COOMBS*) What was he doing?

DORAY. Stealing.

REUTER (*to DORAY*) What?

COOMBS. Chickens.

REUTER. (*to COOMBS*) Yours?

DORAY. No, mine.

REUTER. (*to DORAY*) Who caught him?

COOMBS. We did.

REUTER. (*to COOMBS*) Where?

DORAY. Coming out of my henhouse.

REUTER. (*to DORAY*) Did he have any hens on him?

COOMBS. You bet he had hens on him.

DORAY. Two, wasn't it, Billy?

COOMBS. Yes.

REUTER. Fine! Caught with the goods. The last time I arrested him the judge let him off—first offense. This time he goes to the reform school. (*to ART*) Come on, kiddie, I've had a bunk reserved

for you ever since you pinched my ice cream freezer.

ART. I didn't pinch your ice cream freezer.

REUTER. Don't talk back to an officer. Grab that dog, Nels! Come on! (LARSEN grabs dog and starts to drag him to door. Dog fights him)

MRS. D. Mr. Larsen, please, please don't hurt that dog. (*business until dog is quiet*) Mr. Reuter, isn't there some way to prevent this poor boy being sent to the reform school?

REUTER. (*pausing near L. D.*) Prevent it! Reform schools are built for just such little bums as him. (*to LARSEN*) Hang on to that dog, Nels!

ART. (*to REUTER*) What are you going to do with that dog?

REUTER. His license ain't been paid and I'm going to put him in the dog pound, that's what I'm going to do with him. Come on. (*starts up L. with ART.*)

ART. (*pulling back and facing LARSEN*) You let my dog alone, he ain't hurting you.

REUTER. Come on, come on!

ART. (*tugs with all his might to get away from REUTER*) You let my dog alone. Let him alone. (*with a violent wrench he frees himself from REUTER, rushes down to LARSEN and begins beating him as hard as he can with both fists on the back. LARSEN holds on to the dog's collar with one hand and with the other hand tries to ward off the boy's blows*) Let him alone, I tell you! Let him alone! (REUTER grabs ART by the back of the neck and shakes him)

MRS. D. Stop! You stop hurting that boy!

REUTER. (*without stopping*) I'll learn him to strike an officer! (*drags ART up L.*)

MRS. D. (*tries to pull REUTER's hand from ART's*

collar) Stop, you're hurting him, you're hurting him! Stop, I say!

ART. (*as REUTER drags him off stage*) Jasper! Jasper! I want my dog! I want my dog! (MARJORIE, MRS. KING and BILLY COOMBS rush out, followed by REUTER, dragging ART, followed by MR. and MRS. DORAY. NELS LARSEN fights and tussles with JASPER until they reach the door, then flings him back into room, exits quickly, and slams door shut. The dog is left on stage alone jumping up at door and barking. Patrol effect off rear)

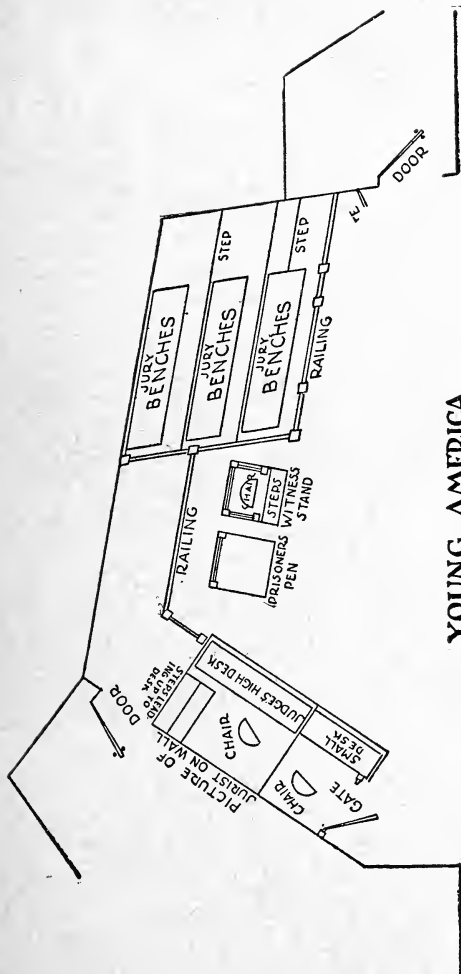
CURTAIN

(2nd Curtain. Dog barking. Patrol effect in distance)

(3rd Curtain. Children lined up in front and Company at back)

(4th Curtain. Company in front and children lined up at back)

(5th Curtain. Jasper alone)



YOUNG AMERICA ACT II

ACT TWO

SCENE:—*The Juvenile Court, 10 A. M.—Two days later.*

Two entrances, R. U. door leading to Judge's chamber. L. 2 door leading to corridor.

Right—Judge's bench. It extends up and down stage. Below it Clerk's bench upon which are two card catalogue filing cases for court records for children. At L. of Judge's bench small docket for prisoner. At L. of docket, witness stand. It is an 18-inch platform with chair on it. The docket and witness stand face front.

Left—three benches for spectators and witnesses. They face front and are enclosed within a picket railing. Gate with spring lock, near left end of front railing.

AT RISE:—*Clerk is seated at his desk; Officer REUTER is talking to him.*

On lower bench and seated in the following order, from right to left, are BENNY KING, MRS. KING, MRS. DORAY, JACK DORAY and BILLY COOMBS.

On second bench, one boy, MRS. MCGUIRE, CASSIE MCGUIRE and PATSY MCGUIRE. The right end of bench is empty.

On rear bench are two girls and one lady spectator. On left end of bench is NUTTY BEEMER.

BAILIFF stands beside gate, outside the railing. After the curtain is up BAILIFF crosses to REUTER.

BAILIFF. Say, Jim, I want to go out and 'phone my wife.

REUTER. All right, go ahead. I'll watch 'em for you.

BAILIFF. Thanks.

REUTER. Don't mention it. It's a pleasure. I'll watch 'em, I love to watch 'em.

BAILIFF. I feel like having some pickled tripe for dinner and I'm going to 'phone my old woman to get some. (*crosses L. to door*)

REUTER. Oh, Clarence, what time do you have dinner up at your house?

BAILIFF. Six o'clock.

REUTER. I'll be there.

BAILIFF. Sure! Come on! (*exits L. D.*)

MRS. D. Jack, dear, we must not allow that boy to be sent to the Reform School.

DORAY. That is for the Judge to decide, Edie.

MRS. D. It will ruin him, Jack, it will ruin his whole life.

DORAY. Now, Edith, let's not discuss the matter any further. We've been talking about it ever since that boy was arrested.

MRS. D. If he is sent to the Reform School, Jack, he will become a confirmed criminal and remain a criminal as long as he lives.

DORAY. Nonsense!

MRS. D. It isn't nonsense, dear. Reformatories are preparatory schools for the penitentiaries. Everybody knows that.

PATSY. (*stands in his chair*) Ma, are they gonna send Art to th' Reform School?

MRS. MCG. Shut up and sit down!

CASSIE. Well, are they?

MRS. MCG. Shut up.

MRS. KING. (*to MRS. MCGUIRE*) Can't you keep those children quiet?

MRS. MCG. You mind your own business and let me mind mine!

REUTER. Silence. (*ad lib between MRS. MCG. and MRS. KING quarreling. Silences MRS. MCGUIRE. Then to MRS. KING*) Don't get nervous, Mrs. King. Sit right where you be. I'll watch her. I love to watch her.

SLAVINSKY. (*from L. and goes C. He is a typical vegetable peddler with German accent*)

MRS. D. Yes, but——(*talks softly, but earnestly to DORAY during following*)

REUTER. (*to SLAVINSKY*) No standing in the court room. (*SLAVINSKY takes seat on rear bench*)

COOMBS (*rises*) Say, Jack, hold my seat. If I stay here another minute I'll blow up. (*places his hat on chair and goes R. to clerk*) Say, when's this trial going to begin, anyhow? (*looks at his watch*) We've been here fifteen solid minutes and they haven't started yet. I'm in a hurry.—I've got to catch that 10:45 express.

ROMNEY. (*entering L. D. with MARJORIE*) Are we late?

COOMBS. (*sarcastically*) Late? You're an hour early.

MARJORIE. (*surprised*) Really?

MRS. D. (*smiling*) No, that's only his little way of joking.

REUTER. (*to MARJORIE as he opens gate*) You'll find a seat over there, Miss Timmins. (*ROMNEY and MARJORIE seat themselves in second row; they talk until seated*)

COOMBS. (*to CLERK*) What are they waiting for, anyhow?

CLERK. The Judge.

COOMBS. Where is he? Can't we send a boy out to find him? I'm in a hurry—ought to have been

at my office hours ago. I didn't want to come to this confounded trial in the first place. I knew it'd spoil the best part of the day.

CLERK. Then why didn't you stay home?

COOMBS. They made me come—sent me a subpoena as long as your arm.

CLERK. Are you interested in some case?

COOMBS. Interested? I certainly am. I'm the chief witness.

CLERK. What case is it?

COOMBS. Art Simpson — burglary — stealing chickens.

MRS. WHITE. (*enters from L. leading WASHINGTON by the hand. She starts over toward C. and stands looking around. She is a very large negro woman. WASHINGTON is a little, comical looking negro boy of seven*)

REUTER. (*to MRS. WHITE*) No standing in the court-room, no standing.

MRS. WHITE. Yaas, sir.

REUTER. Sit down.

MRS. W. Yaas, sir. (*goes to bench L. and sits on COOMBS' hat. WASHINGTON stands L. of her*)

COOMBS. (*to the CLERK*) Say, pardner, isn't there some way I can connect up with the Judge real quick? I've got to get the 10:45 express. Can't you fix it for me? Where's his office? (*turns L. and sees MRS. WHITE in his seat, crossing to DORAY*) Jack, why didn't you keep my seat?

DORAY. (*confused*) Well, you see it was this way, Billy—

COOMBS. Never mind explaining. Give me my hat. (*DORAY looks at MRS. WHITE. Comedy business for COOMBS—to MRS. WHITE*) Madam, will you kindly rise?

MRS. W. Naw sir, I was told to set down.

COOMBS. But you're sitting on my hat.

MRS. W. Naw sir, I ain't settin' on no hat.

COOMBS. But I put it there myself.

MRS. W. Naw sir, I ain't settin' on no hat at all.

COOMBS. (to REUTER) Officer, will you kindly ask that woman to rise?

REUTER. There's other seats up there, Billy. (points to rear row)

COOMBS. But she's sitting on my hat!

MRS. W. Naw sir, I ain't settin' on no hat at all.

REUTER. Oh, that's different. Come Madam, you will have to find another seat.

MRS. W. (as she rises and goes up to rear bench) Awfully funny! Wasn't no sign on that seat when I set down.

BAILIFF. (re-enter L. D.) Thanks, Jim.

REUTER. It was a pleasure. Are we going to have that tripe, Clarence?

BAILIFF. Yes, Jim—six o'clock.

REUTER. Good! I'll be there. (as he is crossing R. To BAILIFF) Here comes the Judge.

CLERK. (as JUDGE enters) Everybody rise! (all rise. As JUDGE sits) Everyone be seated. (all sit. The JUDGE is a fatherly but distinguished man of fifty-five, very kindly, and understands children. He is smooth-shaven)

CLERK. (reading from affidavit) Isaac Slavinsky and Washington White. (hands affidavit to the JUDGE. WASHINGTON starts down C. SLAVINSKY follows)

COOMBS. (to DORAY as WASHINGTON passes him) Say, do we have to wait here until everybody else has been tried?

CLERK. (to WASHINGTON) This way, son. (to SLAVINSKY) Just stand up there. (WASHINGTON

steps up into the prisoners' docket. SLAVINSKY stands beside chair an witness stand. To WASHINGTON, as the JUDGE looks at affidavit) Is your mother with you?

WASH. (*nodding*) Yass, sir.

CLERK. Mrs. White.

MRS. W. (*rising*) Yass, sir.

CLERK. This way, please. (MRS. WHITE takes her place above WASHINGTON a bit to L. of him)

COOMBS. (*cynically to DORAY*) Can you beat that? She sits on my hat and now she's the first one tried. I hope she gets twenty years.

JUDGE. (*to SLAVINSKY*) Do you solemnly swear that the evidence and testimony that you shall give in these proceedings shall be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?

SLAV. I do. (*sits on witness stand*)

JUDGE. (*with dignity*) Are you Isaac Slavinsky?

SLAV. (*gruffly*) Yes.

JUDGE. What is your occupation?

SLAV. I am a peddler.

JUDGE. What do you peddle?

SLAV. Vegetables.

JUDGE. Did you file a complaint against this boy?

SLAV. Yes.

JUDGE. What did he do?

SLAV. He stole my horse and vagon.

JUDGE. Did you see him do it?

SLAV. Yes.

JUDGE. Where was your horse and wagon?

SLAV. In the street.

JUDGE. Where were you?

SLAV. I vas in the pack end of a house selling cabbages. Ven I come pack to my vagon it vas gone. I looked down the street a couple of plocks an' dere it

was goin' away from me. I hollered STOP THIEF! at a policeman. The policeman he jump into an outomobile and stop it. That boy was doin' the drivin' an' he was th' only one in the vagon, so I had him arrested.

JUDGE. (*looks at WASHINGTON a moment. The boy is big-eyed with fear. The JUDGE smiles at him, then simply and with whimsical familiarity*) Hello, Washington!

WASH. Hello.

JUDGE. (*slight pause*) Your name is Washington, isn't it?

WASH. (*grins bashfully*) Yaas, sir.

JUDGE. Were you named after George Washington?

WASH. No sir, Booker.

JUDGE. (*smiles*) Now, Booker—I mean, Washington—I am going to ask you a question and I want you to tell me the truth. You will, won't you?

WASH. Yass, sir.

JUDGE. Did you take this man's horse?

WASH. Yass, sir.

JUDGE. And his wagon?

WASH. Yass, sir.

JUDGE. And you drove away with them?

WASH. Yass, sir.

JUDGE. You knew they didn't belong to you, didn't you?

WASH. Yass, sir.

JUDGE. Then why did you take them?

WASH. 'Cause.

JUDGE. 'Cause why?

WASH. 'Cause I wanted a ride.

JUDGE. Because you wanted a ride? Why didn't you ask for a ride?

WASH. 'Cause I wanted to drive the horse.

JUDGE. (*humoring him*) Oh, that was it! You wanted to drive the horse. Do you like horses?

WASH. Yass, Sir.

JUDGE. Was that the only reason you took the wagon—so that you could drive the horse?

WASH. Yass, sir.

JUDGE. (*to SLAV.*) Mr. Slavinsky, was the horse or wagon damaged in any way?

SLAV. No, but I had to valk t'ree plocks to get 'em.

JUDGE. (*to WASH.*) Have you ever been here before?

WASH. Naw sir.

JUDGE. Have you ever run away with anything before?

WASH. Naw sir.

JUDGE. Do you know what it is sometimes called when little boys run away with things that don't belong to them?

WASH. Yass, sir.

JUDGE. What?

WASH. Stealin'.

JUDGE. Exactly. And you know what happens to men when they do that, don't you?

WASH. Yass, sir.

JUDGE. When men steal they are sent to prison. You don't want to go to prison, do you?

WASH. (*emphatically*) Naw, sir.

JUDGE. Of course not! And I don't want to send you to prison. And I'm not going to either. No, sir! I'm going to let you go home, right now—with your mother. But I want you to promise me that you will not run away with any more horses—or wagons—or anything else that doesn't belong to you. Will you promise?

WASH. Yass, sir.

JUDGE. (*turns to MRS. WHITE*) How is Washington at home, Mrs. White? Is he a good little boy?

MRS. WHITE. Yaas, sir, he's a perfect little angel!

JUDGE. That's nice. (*to WASHINGTON*) Now the next time you want to drive a horse, ask someone to let you and if no one will let you, come and tell me and maybe I can arrange it for you. (*dismissing him*) That's all.

MRS. W. Thank you, Judge. (*comes down-stage, grabs WASHINGTON by the arm and shoves him before her to door L.*) Come on here, you confounded little thief. You always got me in court. I'm going to half kill you when I get you home. (*she exits with WASHINGTON L.*)

SLAV. (*as MRS. WHITE and WASH. exit*) Ain't you going to send him to jail?

JUDGE. Jail? That little boy to jail?

SLAV. Sure! He stole, an' stealin's a crime, ain't it?

JUDGE. This is a juvenile court, Mr. Slavinsky, not a criminal court, and the purpose of a juvenile court is to correct, and as far as possible, to help children, not to punish them.

SLAV. That's all right, but——

JUDGE. Your complaint against the boy has been set aside and the case is dismissed. (*to CLERK*) Next!

SLAV. (*exits grumbling, L.*) A fine-a court in America. A schwartzer duyvil ganeffs a horse an wagon and noddings, etc. (*exit*)

COOMBS. I see what we're up against. (*points to JUDGE*) He'll probably pin a gold medal on Art Simpson. I wish I was running this court—I'd send him up for just about five years.

CLERK. (*reading from back of affidavit*) "John Doray and Arthur Simpson."

COOMBS. It's about time he's saying that. I never saw such a slow place in my life!

- BAILIFF. (*exits door L. and calls*) This way, please. (*standing in doorway L.*)

(ARTHUR *enters and goes to prisoner's docket*)

JUDGE. (*looks at ARTHUR kindly for a moment*) Arthur, you are charged with breaking into a chicken coop and taking chickens. Did you do it?

(ARTHUR *makes no reply. Turns R. to REUTER*) Officer Reuter, take the stand, please. (REUTER *steps on witness stand. The JUDGE raises his hand. REUTER raises his*) Do you solemnly swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?

REUTER. I do.

JUDGE. (REUTER *sits on witness seat*) Your name?

REUTER. (*importantly*) James J. Reuter, Officer No. 1. (CLERK *makes record of evidence*)

JUDGE. Did you arrest this boy?

REUTER. I certainly did.

JUDGE. Where?

REUTER. At the home of Jack Doray, 97 Orchard Street.

JUDGE. Did you catch him in the act of stealing chickens?

REUTER. No, sir, I arrested him after he was caught.

JUDGE. You were called to make the arrest?

REUTER. Yes, sir.

JUDGE. Who called you?

REUTER. Doray.

JUDGE. Did you make the arrest alone?

REUTER. No, sir. I took Nels Larsen with me.

JUDGE. Does it require two officers to arrest one boy?

REUTER. No, sir. I took Nels along to protect the neighbors. This boy had 'em all scared stiff.

JUDGE. How did you know they were scared stiff?

REUTER. Doray told me so.

JUDGE. Did he ask you to bring an extra policeman?

REUTER. Yes, sir.

JUDGE. That is all. Thank you. (REUTER gives funny cough. REUTER goes down to below CLERK's desk) Mr. Doray. (DORAY rises and takes witness stand. JUDGE raises his hand) You solemnly swear that the evidence and testimony that you shall give in these proceedings shall be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?

DORAY. (with raised hand) I do.

JUDGE. Your full name, please?

DORAY. John Rudolph Doray.

JUDGE. (as DORAY sits) Mr. Doray, will you kindly relate as briefly as possible what you know about this case?

DORAY. Yes, sir. Well, night before last two friends of mine and I were playing cards at my house. We had been playing a short while when a gang of boys began to tick-tack the house. We frightened them away and resumed our game. Suddenly my chickens began to squawk. Billy Coombs and I rushed out to the chicken coop, caught this boy, took him into the house and telephoned for the police.

JUDGE. Was he in the chicken coop when you caught him?

DORAY. No, sir, he was just coming out of the coop.

JUDGE. Did he have a chicken?

DORAY. No sir, he had two chickens.

JUDGE. You saw them?

DORAY. Yes sir, he had one in each hand.

JUDGE. When he saw *you* what did he do?

DORAY. He threw the chickens at me and ran.

JUDGE. And what did you do?

DORAY. Ducked.

JUDGE. Ducked?

DORAY. That is, I tried to dodge the chickens, but one of them hit me in the face.

JUDGE. Oh, one of them struck you in the face?

DORAY. Yes, it sort of blinded me for a moment—took me off my guard.

JUDGE. And after you got back on your guard, then what?

DORAY. I chased the boy.

JUDGE. Where did he run?

DORAY. Down the alley that runs behind my chicken coop.

JUDGE. How far did you chase him before you caught him?

DORAY. I don't know; not more than twenty yards perhaps. He stumbled over something and fell.

JUDGE. Was Mr. Coombs with you when you captured the boy?

COOMBS. (*jumps to his feet*) No sir, Judge. You see, it was this way. I had just—

JUDGE. (*courteously but firmly*) Just a moment, Mr. Coombs. I am examining Mr. Doray.

COOMBS. (*pepperishly*) All right, go ahead. (*sits—sputtering*)

JUDGE. (*to DORAY*) Then Mr. Coombs was not with you when you actually caught the boy?

DORAY. No, sir.

JUDGE. Do you make a practice of keeping the door of your chicken coop locked, Mr. Doray?

DORAY. Yes, sir.

JUDGE. On this particular night was it locked?

DORAY. It was.

JUDGE. Are you sure?

DORAY. Yes, sir.

JUDGE. Did you lock it yourself?

DORAY. No, sir.

JUDGE. Then why are you sure it was locked?

DORAY. Because locking up the chickens is a prerogative that my wife has exercised ever since we have had chickens and when my wife does anything—she does it.

MRS. D. (*rises*) Mr. Judge? (*JUDGE looks at her*) You will pardon my speaking without an invitation—(*to DORAY*)—and I am sure you will forgive me, Jack, for contradicting you, but Mr. Judge, the evening Arthur called on our chickens their coop had not been locked.

DORAY. Why, Edie Doray, you know very well—

MRS. D. I know, dear, because I never lock up the chickens until after the dinner dishes are washed—

DORAY. Yes, I know, but—

MRS. D. —and night before last, if you remember, while I was doing the dishes—

DORAY. Yes, I know, but—

MRS. D. —you began talking baseball and as soon as I had finished the dishes, I—

COOMBS. (*to the JUDGE as he rises*) Now, Judge, why don't you ask the boy if the door was locked—he knows.

JUDGE. (*pounding bench with gavel*) Order, Mr. Coombs! Order!

COOMBS. (*disgusted and disgruntled*) All right!
(*seats himself*)

JUDGE. (*to MRS. DORAY—courteously*) Your testimony is somewhat irregular, Mrs. Doray, but it is of great value and I am deeply indebted to you.

MRS. D. Thank you.

JUDGE. (*to MRS. DORAY*) To break into and enter a building that has been locked is a grave offense. Stealing is of itself a crime, but when preceded by the act of breaking and entering it constitutes burglary, and burglary is a very serious matter. (*smiles at her*) So you see what you have told the Court has a direct bearing on the case. I thank you.

MRS. D. You are welcome, I am sure. (*DORAY turns to MRS. D. starts to speak. MRS. D. sits*)

JUDGE. (*to DORAY*) Now, Mr. Doray, on this particular night, was the door of your chicken coop open or closed?

DORAY. Well, I'm quite sure, your honor, that I wouldn't—(*laughs embarrassedly—turns to MRS. D.*) Which was it, Edie, open?

MRS. D. No, dear, *closed*.

DORAY. (*turns to JUDGE*) Closed.

JUDGE. (*to MRS. D.*) Thank you. (*to DORAY*) Mr. Doray, it is quite evident that your wife knows more about this case than you do.

DORAY. (*trying to explain—laughing*) Well, you see, Judge, Edie and I have had the doggondest arguments—

JUDGE. (*dismissing him coldly*) That is all, thank you. (*DORAY resumes seat on bench L.*)

COOMBS. (*jumps delightedly to his feet*) Good! Now I'll get a chance to talk. (*tries to open gate; to bailiff*) Say, what's the matter with this gate? Wasn't it made to open?

JUDGE. Mrs. Doray, will you kindly take the stand?

MRS. D. (*surprised, as she rises*) Me?

JUDGE. If you please.

DORAY. (*to COOMBS*) I'll open it.

MRS. DORAY. Surely, if I can be of any service. (*JACK DORAY opens the gate, MRS. DORAY goes to c. preceded by COOMBS who goes towards Judge's bench*)

COOMBS. (*rapidly as he crosses to JUDGE*) Excuse my butting in, Judge, but I'm in an awful hurry. Want to get to my office just as quick as I can. Can't you put me on the stand now? Mrs. Doray has all the time in the world. (*to MRS. DORAY, who is ascending steps to stand*) Haven't you? (*to the JUDGE*) Of course she has. (*goes up steps to stand*) Now, I'll just take the stand, tell my little story and beat it. (*on stand, raising his hand to the clerk*) Coombs, William A. (*faces the JUDGE, raises his hand and swears himself in*) The truth, the whole truth and nothing else, so help me God. (*sits in chair, looks at watch, leans forward with hands on his knees. Looks at JUDGE who is eyeing him calmly*) What are you waiting for?

JUDGE. (*deliberately, but with dignity*) It is quite evident Mr. Coombs, that you have not had much experience in court rooms.

COOMBS. (*quickly*) No, and I don't want to have, either. I never saw a place in my life where they wasted so much time. Now let's get down to business—my time is money. I've got to catch that 10:45 express. What do you want to ask me?

JUDGE. Frankly, Mr. Coombs, and with as much emphasis as the dignity of the Bench will permit, I ask you to withdraw from this room.

COOMBS. (*flabbergasted*) What!

JUDGE. You are guilty of contempt of court on

three counts. (COOMBS gazes at him blankly) Ordinarily you would be arrested and fined for this offense, but the Court, realizing that a man of your temperament is not always responsible for what he says and does, withholds the customary penalty and simply requests that you retire from this room.

COOMBS. (*smiling ironically*) All right, if that's the way you feel about it. (*rises*) But frankly and with as much emphasis as the dignity of my temperament will permit, I never got such a raw deal in my life, nowhere! (*starts toward L. door*)

JUDGE. (*raps with gavel*) Officer, arrest that man. (COOMBS stops and looks at the JUDGE)

REUTER. (*going towards COOMBS*) I'm sorry, Billy, but I'll have to arrest you.

COOMBS. (*indignantly*) What're you arresting me for? I didn't steal the chickens.

JUDGE. (*severely*) You are in contempt of Court.

COOMBS. (*going to L. of JUDGE's bench and speaking persuasively, but rapidly*) Now, look here, Judge, you don't want to arrest me. We both lost our tempers, that's all. You lost yours, I lost mine. We both lost 'em. Now that's all right. I'll just take the stand and tell my little story and we'll call it square. (*goes up to witness stand*) You don't want to arrest me! No!

JUDGE. (*to REUTER*) Officer, place that man under arrest.

COOMBS. (*persuasively, going to JUDGE's bench*) Now, look here, Judge—

REUTER. I'm sorry, Billy, but the law is the law. (*places his hand on COOMBS' shoulder*) Consider yourself arrested.

COOMBS. (*so exasperated he is funny*) Now, Judge, be reasonable.

JUDGE. (*firmly*) I fine you ten dollars.

COOMBS. (*angrily, as he jerks wallet out of pocket*) All right, if that's all you want. (*takes \$10. note and slaps it down in front of the JUDGE*) There!

JUDGE. Pay the Clerk.

COOMBS. (*pepperishly*) You've got more time than I have. (*REUTER crosses down R. COOMBS starts toward door L.*)

JUDGE. (*to BAILIFF*) Stop him. (*BAILIFF holds up hand to stop COOMBS*)

COOMBS. (*facing the JUDGE*) Now what's the matter?

JUDGE. This may be only a Juvenile Court, but after all it is a Court and its dignity must be maintained.

COOMBS. (*with satirical politeness*) All right, maintain it. (*Turns again to door L.*)

JUDGE. Mr. Coombs. (*COOMBS turns and looks at the JUDGE*) I impose upon you an additional fine of \$25.

COOMBS. (*after looking satirically at the JUDGE for a moment*) Say, is this county too poor to pay you a salary? (*jerks out his wallet, takes note from it, then turns to DORAY*) Jack, lend me five, will you? I've only got twenty. (*DORAY, BENNY and ROMNEY take out pocket books*)

ROMNEY. (*rising with \$5 bill in his hand*) Here's five, Billy.

COOMBS. Keep it; I may need it yet. (*to DORAY, who hands him a \$5 bill*) Thanks. (*goes to JUDGE's bench and lays notes on it*) Twenty-five—three fives and a ten.

JUDGE. (*as COOMBS starts L.*) It was the instruction of the Court that you pay the recorder.

COOMBS. (*turns, picks up the money—puts it down on the CLERK'S desk*) Thirty-five. Send the receipt to my office, 703 Jackson Bldg. (*up toward ROMNEY*) I certainly am having my day in court. Let me have that five will you Romney? (ROMNEY *hands him the bill*) All I've left is a commutation ticket—(DORAY *hands him his hat*) —and what was a hat. (*puts the hat on and start to exit. To the BAILIFF as he gets near door*) Get out of my way!

JUDGE. Mr. Coombs!

COOMBS. (*turns and looks at the JUDGE*) All right, I'm going. I'm going. (*exits L. hurriedly*)

JUDGE. (*apologetically to MRS. DORAY, who has been standing at foot of steps and R. of spectators bench*) Mrs. Doray, I regret this little unpleasantness, but people must be made to respect the dignity of the Courts.

MRS. D. (*sympathetically*) I don't blame you one bit, Mr. Judge; Billy Coombs means all right, but he's entirely too free with his temper.

JUDGE. (*officially*) We will now continue the trial. (*to MRS. DORAY*) Won't you please be seated? (*indicating witness stand*)

MRS. D. Thank you. (*sits in witness chair*)

JUDGE. (*to MRS. D. raising his hand*) You solemnly swear that the evidence and testimony that you shall give in these proceedings shall be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?

MRS. D. Yes, sir.

JUDGE. Your name, please?

MRS. D. Edith.

JUDGE. Mrs. Doray, you were not subpoenaed to testify at this trial, but I assume you are willing to aid us in whatever way you can to render justice.

MRS. D. Most assuredly.

JUDGE. Thank you. When your husband was on

the stand a few minutes ago, Mrs. Doray, he testified that locking up the chickens was a little prerogative that you have exercised ever since you have had chickens.

MRS. D. It is. I always lock them up.

JUDGE. Then you are sure that on the night the chickens were taken the door to the coop was not locked?

MRS. D. Positively.

JUDGE. But it was closed?

MRS. D. Yes.

JUDGE. (*in an easy, lucid manner*) In trying a child, for violating the law, Mrs. Doray, the Juvenile Court, unlike the regular Court, must take into account as a mitigating circumstance, the element of temptation. The law assumes that a child is less able to resist temptation than is an adult and for that reason it is more lenient with him. Have I made myself understood?

MRS. D. Perfectly.

JUDGE. So as I understand it, Mrs. Doray, you keep your chickens penned up?

MRS. D. Yes, sir.

JUDGE. Then so far as you are aware you have in no way whatever tempted this boy to take them?

MRS. D. No, sir.

JUDGE. Do you know this boy, Mrs. Doray?

MRS. D. Yes, and I knew his mother too. She was a good woman, your honor.

JUDGE. Thank you, that is all, I believe. (MRS. DORAY *rises*) I am grateful to you for testifying.

MRS. D. It has been a privilege. (*comes down from stand*) You don't think you will send him to the Reform School, do you, Your Honor?

JUDGE. That remains to be seen.

MRS. D. Thank you. (*She returns to former seat, DORAY opening gate for her.*)

JUDGE. (*looks at ARTHUR meditatively, then quite firmly, but in a friendly tone*) Arthur, the evidence in this case seems to prove conclusively that you did enter Mr. Doray's—or rather Mrs. Doray's—chicken coop, and that you did take some of her chickens. Why did you do it?

JUDGE. (*ARTHUR makes no reply. The JUDGE waits a moment, then smiles*) Did you want to sell them? (*pause*) Did you want to eat them? (*pause*) Did you want to trade them off for a motor-cycle? (*ARTHUR makes no reply to these questions*) (*in a firmer voice*) You have been in this court once before, haven't you, Arthur? (*ARTHUR makes no reply. The JUDGE turns towards the CLERK*) Mr. Janison, has the boy been here before?

CLERK. Yes sir.

JUDGE. (*to ART*) This is your second offense. Do you know what that means? It means that you will be sent to a reformatory unless you help me keep you out. Now why did you take those chickens? (*pause; then sternly*) Do you intend to answer my questions? (*No reply from ARTHUR*) Very well, then there is only one thing left for me to do, and that is—

NUTTY. (*rising to his feet. NUTTY is a ragged, rough-looking, red-headed boy of fifteen, breezy, likeable, and barefooted*) Mister, Your Honor, Art didn't steal them chickens—Honest, he didn't.

JUDGE. How do you know he didn't?

NUTTY. 'Cause he was with me night 'fore last and I know everything he done.

JUDGE. He was with you?

NUTTY. Sure he was.

JUDGE. Then how do you account for his being in Mrs. Doray's chicken coop?

NUTTY. (*coming down to gate as he speaks*) He wasn't. You see, Judge, it was like this. (*jumps over gate and comes down stage c.*) Me an' Art an' Jasper was on our way home an' was goin' down the alley to save time. Jist as we gits back of Doray's hen house some kid jumps out an' yells "Beat it!" Now, whenever a guy hears de word "Beat it," Judge, he don't stop to ask no questions. No, sir. It's time for speed. An' that's jist what me an' Art done. I makes me getaway, but Art gets his legs all tangled up wid Jasper and down he flops, de poor boob, and den dey grab him. That's the way it happened Judge. Art didn't steal them chickens. Naw, he didn't steal 'em any more'n you did.

JUDGE. (*surprised and curious*) Well, this sounds quite interesting.

NUTTY. An' it's the truth, Judge, it's the truth.

JUDGE. What is your name?

NUTTY. Nutty Beemer.

JUDGE. Are you and Arthur close friends?

NUTTY. Sure! An' he's a prince, Judge. He's a prince when you knows him. He didn't glom them chickens, honest he didn't.

JUDGE. (*to ARTHUR*) Arthur, why didn't you tell me this?

NUTTY. 'Cause he didn't think you'd believe him.

JUDGE. Is that so, Arthur?

NUTTY. (*to ARTHUR*) Tell him. (*to the JUDGE as ARTHUR makes no reply*) Sure it's so, Judge. That's why he won't answer you now. 'Cause he don't think you'll believe him. Nobody believes him. They've all got it in for him—everybody. That's why he won't answer you. Th' only people he'll talk to is me an' Jasper.

JUDGE. Jasper? Who is Jasper?

NUTTY. Art's dog—an' he's some dog, too! He can lick anything in this town! Can't he, Art?

ART. Yes, or in any other town. (*ART smiles proudly*)

JUDGE. (*to ART.*) Where is he now?

ART. Ask Jim Reuter—(*as he looks down R. at REUTER*) The big stiff!

JUDGE. That kind of talk, young man, is not going to help you. (*to REUTER*) Officer Reuter, do you know where this boy's dog is?

REUTER. (*up*) No, sir. The dog's tax hasn't been paid. We were going to take him to the dog pound the night we arrested the defendant, but when it come to a show-down it took both of us to handle the defendant, so we left the dog at Doray's and when I went back to get him he wasn't there.

JUDGE. What became of him?

REUTER. I don't know. I guess maybe he jumped through the window and got away.

ART. (*triumphantly*) Good! He slipped one over on you that time, didn't he—you big cheese?

REUTER. Don't call me names! I'm an officer.

JUDGE. (*raps with gavel—to ART.*) Order!!

REUTER (*shaking finger at ART*) I'll get that hound yet!

JUDGE. Officer Reuter!

REUTER. Beg your pardon, Your Honor. (*resumes seat on stool, loses balance and with difficulty recovers himself*)

JUDGE. (*to NUTTY*) Sonny, sit up there a moment, will you?

NUTTY. Sure. (*takes witness chair*)

JUDGE. Now, son, you are going to tell me the truth, aren't you?

NUTTY. Sure.

JUDGE. What did you say your name was?

NUTTY. Nutty!

JUDGE. Your Christian name?

NUTTY. Ain't got none.

JUDGE. What does your mother call you?

NUTTY. Step outside an' I tell you—she's me stepmother.

JUDGE. What does your father call you?

NUTTY. He don't—he's dead.

JUDGE. You have been to school, haven't you?

NUTTY. Onct.

JUDGE. Well, what did your teacher call you?

NUTTY. (*disgusted*) Harold!

JUDGE. Now, Harold, as you came past Mrs. Doray's chicken coop you say that you saw a boy rush out of it?

NUTTY. Sure I saw him.

JUDGE. And he said "Beat it!"

NUTTY. Yes, but he didn't say it—he yelled it.

JUDGE. Did you see him before he yelled?

NUTTY. Sure I did.

JUDGE. Did he do anything?

NUTTY. Yep.

JUDGE. What?

NUTTY. He flung some chickens.

JUDGE. What did he fling the chickens at?

NUTTY. I don't know; I didn't take time to look.

JUDGE. But you did see him fling some chickens at something? Is that it?

NUTTY. Yep.

JUDGE. How do you know they were chickens?

NUTTY. 'Cause I heard 'em squawk.

JUDGE. Yes—yes, of course. Now let me get this matter clear in my mind.

NUTTY. (*smiling, boyishly, but not impudently*) Sure, go ahead.

JUDGE. As you and Arthur were coming home, you went down the alley behind Doray's house to save time. Is that it?

NUTTY. Yep, that's it.

JUDGE. Where were you coming from?

NUTTY. Main Street.

JUDGE. What had you been doing on Main Street?

NUTTY. Seein' the movies.

JUDGE. Seeing the movies?

NUTTY. Yep.

JUDGE. Yep what?

NUTTY. Yep, seein' the movies.

JUDGE. Don't say yep—say "yes, sir."

NUTTY. Yes, sir.

JUDGE. What were you doing before you saw the movies?

NUTTY. Trying to learn Jasper some new stunts.

JUDGE. And what did you do after you left the movies?

NUTTY. We beat it for home.

JUDGE. Arthur's home?

NUTTY. No, Art ain't got no home. He lives with his aunt.

JUDGE. Mrs. McGuire?

NUTTY. Yes—an' she's the meanest woman that ever lived.

PATSY. (*to MRS. MCG. as he rises*) Ma, he's talkin' about you! (*MRS. MCGUIRE pushes PATSY back into seat and angrily resumes her own*)

JUDGE. (*raps with gavel*) Order! Order!! (*to NUTTY*) Are you and Arthur members of a gang that tick-tacked Mr. Doray's house, shortly before Mr. Doray caught Arthur?

NUTTY. (*disdainfully*) Naw, we've got a gang of our own.

JUDGE. Who are in your gang?

NUTTY. Nobody but just me an' Art an' Jasper.

JUDGE. Oh, an exclusive sort of gang.

NUTTY. Huh?

JUDGE. Eh?

NUTTY. Sir?

JUDGE. Oh, an exclusive sort of gang.

NUTTY. Yes, sir.

JUDGE. Then on this particular evening you and Arthur had not been up to any mischief whatsoever?

NUTTY. Nope—sir.

JUDGE. But before going to the movies you went down to the railroad station to see the train come in. Was that it?

NUTTY. Nope; I said we was tryin' to learn Jasper some new tricks.

JUDGE. Oh, I see! Then it was *after* the movies that you went down to the railroad station?

NUTTY. Naw! After the movies we beat it for home. Say! I ain't said nothin' about no railroad station. (JUDGE, CLERK and REUTER exchange looks. *Indignantly as the JUDGE smiles*) What're you tryin' to do—make me double cross myself?

JUDGE. (to DORAY) Mr. Doray, this seems to be a case of mistaken identity.

DORAY. (rising) Your Honor, I—

JUDGE. I have no doubt that you saw a boy come out of your chicken coop with two chickens, but in the light of what Master Harold Beemer has just testified, and I have no reason to disbelieve him, there is in my mind a reasonable doubt that the boy you caught—this boy—was the boy you saw coming out of your coop.

DORAY. But Your Honor—

JUDGE. Until the Court is convinced on that point, the defendant must be given the benefit of the doubt.

DORAY. If it's only a question of my word against the word of this boy, Your Honor—

BENNY. (*rising*) Now wait a minute, Jack. I'll fix it for you.

DORAY. (*disgusted*) All right, fix it! (*sits*)

BENNY. (*to JUDGE after DORAY sits*) Your Honor—I think that perhaps I can throw some light on this case.

JUDGE. In what way?

BENNY. By proving that Master Harold Beemer has not been telling the truth.

JUDGE. Will you kindly take the stand? (*to NUTTY*) Young man—

NUTTY. Huh? Sir?

JUDGE. Have you been lying to me?

NUTTY. (*gamely*) Do I look like I was lyin'?

JUDGE. No, I must admit that you don't. (*NUTTY comes down from witness stand*)

NUTTY. (*to BENNY, softly. BENNY is now near witness stand*) Have a heart now! (*BENNY goes on witness stand. NUTTY stands near railing, gazing at floor.*)

JUDGE. (*to BENNY*) You solemnly swear that the evidence and testimony you shall give in these proceedings shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

BENNY. I do.

JUDGE. Your name, please?

BENNY. Benjamin Franklin King.

JUDGE. Where do you live?

BENNY. Number 61 Orchard Street—one block from Mr. Doray.

JUDGE. Be seated. (*BENNY sits*) You say this boy—(*indicating NUTTY*)—has not told me the truth?

BENNY. He has not.

JUDGE. How do you know he hasn't?

BENNY. The night Jack Doray's chickens were stolen I was at Jack's house. Suddenly my wife rushed in and told me that someone was stealing my chickens. I hiked for home and just as I reached the chicken coop I heard a boy running down the alley and I caught him. The boy I caught, Your Honor, was that boy there. (*points to NUTTY.*)

JUDGE. Your narrative is quite interesting, Mr. King. But it does not prove in any way that the testimony of this boy is false. On the contrary, it corroborates his own statement—that he did run down the alley.

BENNY. Yes, sir, but he did *not* say that while *running* down the alley he had a *chicken* under his arm.

JUDGE. A chicken?

BENNY. Yes sir, a Plymouth Rock rooster.

JUDGE. How do you know he had it?

BENNY. Because I took it away from him.

JUDGE. Oh! (*to NUTTY*) So you *were* lying to me!

NUTTY. (*turns angrily on BENNY*) Gee! You're a beaut! Why didn't you keep still? Couldn't you see I was trying to save my pal?

BENNY. (*to NUTTY*) That was why I kept still as long as I did, Nutty.

JUDGE. (*to NUTTY*) Now, young man, we will get down to facts. Your alibi for Art was a lie from beginning to end, wasn't it? The truth this time—no more lies. Wasn't it?

NUTTY. Yes, sir.

JUDGE. You and Art Simpson had deliberately planned to take some of Mrs. Doray's chickens, hadn't you?

NUTTY. Yes, sir.

JUDGE. You had taken your chicken and were in the alley waiting for Art to come out of the coop with his chickens when Mr. Doray appeared on the scene. Art hollered "Beat it!" you rushed down the alley and that gentleman—(*points to KING*)—caught you. Wasn't that the way it happened?

NUTTY. Yeh, but Art didn't do any of the swipin'. I swiped 'em all meself.

ART. Don't lie no more Nutty! He'll soak you the next time. (*to the JUDGE*) He didn't take them chickens, Judge. I took 'em, all three of 'em. He's been stuffin' you to help me.

JUDGE. (*to NUTTY*) Then you didn't take any of the chickens?

NUTTY. (*takes a step towards the JUDGE*) But I was there an'—(*ART glances at him and he stops short*)

JUDGE. (*to KING*) That is all. Thank you. Mrs. McGuire. (*as KING resumes seat MRS. MCGUIRE takes the stand; as she and BENNY are crossing—JUDGE says to CLERK*) Mr. Jameson, has Harold Beemer a record in this court?

CLERK. (*glancing in filing case*) No, Your Honor.

JUDGE. Thank you. (*to NUTTY, severely*) Harold, I shall consider this your first offense, but if you repeat it you will be dealt with severely, I warn you. (*turns toward MRS. MCGUIRE on the stand*) Mrs. McGuire, the last time this boy—(*indicating ART*)—was in Court I put him on probation and you volunteered to act as his sponsor, didn't you?

MRS. MCG. I did that, but faith and I want to resign the job. Sure and I've been as kind and gentle to him as his own mother would have been and here he treats me like a tom-cat. (*to ART*) Ain't you ashamed of yourself.

JUDGE. If I give your nephew another chance, Mrs. McGuire, would you be willing to act again as his sponsor?

MRS. MCG. (*indignantly*) Phat! After all I have suffered at his hands! Heaven forbid!

JUDGE. Then you refuse?

MRS. MCG. Certainly I refuse. Enough is enough, Your Honor. An' besides, I have children of my own to look after. Phat that boy needs is the reform school and the quicker you send him there the quicker he'll brace up and be a man—(*to ART*)—if he's ever going to be a man.

JUDGE. (*gravely and slowly to ART, after a slight pause*) Arthur, there seems to be only one thing to do with you.

NUTTY. (*quietly but intensely sincere*) Don't send him away, Judge.

JUDGE. (*firmly but not harshly, to NUTTY*) Silence! (*to ART*) This is your 3rd offense and a very serious one. You are charged with stealing and the charge has been proved. In the past your aunt tried to help you, but to no purpose. I tried to help you this morning and you rejected my efforts with sullen contempt. You are wayward, obstinate, and unresponsive. What you need is discipline. Therefore, I commit you to the State Reformatory for a period of one year. (*pause*)

NUTTY. (*turning toward the JUDGE. He is barely able to keep back the tears*) Don't send him away, Judge. Me an' him are pals, Judge. (*JUDGE raps with gavel. The BAILIFF snaps his fingers to NUTTY who exits L. sobbing, covering his face with his cap which he has been holding in his hand*)

JUDGE. (*to ART*) Before I instruct the clerk to make out your commitment papers have you any-

thing you wish to say? (ARTHUR *nods his head slowly*) What is it?

ART. Can I take my dog to the Reform School with me?

JUDGE. No.

ART. (*wistfully*) Then what's to become of him?

JUDGE. You should have thought of that before you took the chickens.

ART. But I can't go away and leave my dog.

JUDGE. (*sternly*) You should have thought of that before.

ART. But Jasper's my friend. Him and Nutty's the only friends I've got. I had him when my mother died. She thought a lot of me and Jasper. I don't care what you do to me, Judge. Send me to the Reform School for the rest of my life if you want to, but don't take away my dog. Jasper's my friend. He's the best friend I've got. Please, please, Judge, don't take away my dog. (*buries his face in his arms and cries*)

MRS. D. (*rises and says simply but as if deeply moved*) Your Honor—(JUDGE *looks at her*) I will act as Arthur's sponsor.

DORAY. (*rises, amazed*) Edith! (MRS. KING, MARJORIE, BENNY and ROMNEY *stare at her*)

MRS. K. Mrs. Doray!

MRS. MCG. (*to MRS. DORAY*) Faith, an' ye'd better go slow, ma'am, for he's the biggest little devil as ever lived.

JUDGE. That's all, Mrs. McGuire. (MRS. MCGUIRE *resumes her seat in spectators' bench*)

MRS. D. (*to the JUDGE*) If you will give the boy one more chance I will be responsible for everything he does.

DORAY. Edith, you shall do no such thing.

MRS. D. But I insist, dear. (*comes from spectators' bench outside railing, DORAY following*)

DORAY. And I object, I refuse absolutely to let you assume any such responsibility.

MRS. D. (*comes through gate*) Your Honor, I am of legal age and own property. Does that qualify me to act as sponsor?

DORAY. (*following Edith*) Now do be reasonable, Edie. What could you do with a little reprobate like that?

MRS. D. Give him a home.

DORAY. You mean, have him live with us?

MRS. D. Yes, why not?

DORAY. (*over quickly to JUDGE*) Your Honor, I positively refuse to allow my wife to—

MRS. D. Now, Jack, do be reasonable.

DORAY. (*emphatically*) I am reasonable, but I don't propose to have my home turned into a regenerating plant.

MRS. D. (*trying to reason*) But Jack, dear—

DORAY. No, no, no! (*stamps foot and crosses angrily to L.*)

MRS. D. (*calmly to the JUDGE*) Am I legally qualified to act as sponsor?

JUDGE. You are.

MRS. D. Then will you kindly appoint me?

DORAY. (*going quickly to the JUDGE*) Your Honor, I absolutely refuse to allow you to appoint my wife sponsor for that boy.

JUDGE. With all due respect to you, Mr. Doray, in view of what your wife has just said, the Court reserves the right to act as it sees fit.

MRS. D. (*to ARTHUR, in a kind tone*) Arthur, would you like to live with us?

DORAY. Edith! (*starts towards her*)

MRS. D. (*to ART*) Would you?

DORAY. I tell you——

MRS. D. Just a moment, dear. Let Arthur answer my question.

DORAY. Never mind Arthur. I tell you we are not going to take that boy into our home.

MRS. D. (*after a slight pause*) Do you wish to live with us, Arthur?

ART. (*after glancing at DORAY and sizing him up*) No.

DORAY. (*triumphantly*) There you are! (*goes to seat and picks up hat*)

MRS. D. (*pleasantly to ARTHUR, ignoring DORAY*) What I meant was would you rather live with us than go to the Reform School?

ART. (*to MRS. DORAY*) Can I have my dog?

MRS. D. Surely you may have your dog.

DORAY. (*crossing R., vehemently to the JUDGE*) Your Honor, no woman has the right to turn a man's house into a dog kennel. I won't stand it! I simply won't stand it! (*turns to EDITH, takes her arm and starts L.*) Edith, you come with me. The place for you is home. (*starts L.*)

JUDGE. Just a moment, Mr. Doray. (*DORAY stops and looks back*) This case has not been dismissed.

DORAY. It has so far as I'm concerned. (*to MRS. DORAY*) Come on. (*DORAY starts again for door L.*)

JUDGE. (*raps with gavel—emphatically*) Mr. Doray! (*DORAY pays no attention to JUDGE. The JUDGE pounds with gavel. DORAY pauses*) This case has not been dismissed.

DORAY. Well, do you think—— (*stiffly apologetic*) I beg your pardon.

JUDGE. (*with dignity*) Your wife, in desiring to be appointed sponsor for this boy, Mr. Doray, is prompted by a noble impulse. She wishes to help

him. She wishes to give him one more opportunity to make a man of himself.

DORAY. (*crossing to c.*) That's all very well, Your Honor, but I don't want that boy in my home.

JUDGE. In view of the fact that your wife is so desirous of helping the boy, why do you so vigorously oppose his entering your home?

DORAY. Because I don't want him there, that's all.

JUDGE. Why?

DORAY. (*emphatically*) Because!

JUDGE. Because why?

DORAY. (*crossing to JUDGE*) I don't want that boy in my house. I don't want him there and that's all there is to it.

JUDGE. Is it a question of expense?

DORAY. No.

JUDGE. Have you any children?

DORAY. No, but——

JUDGE. You like children, don't you?

DORAY. Certainly I like them, but when it comes to raising them I prefer to raise my own.

JUDGE. Naturally, but your wife being appointed sponsor for this boy is in no way obligated to raise him.

DORAY. Then what is she obligated to do?

JUDGE. To keep him until he is able to provide for himself or until she can arrange with some one else to provide for him.

DORAY. That's just it! "Keep him!" I don't want to keep him at all.

JUDGE. Have you a good reason?

DORAY. (*R. of ARTHUR*) The best reason in the world—I don't want that boy in my house, that's all.

JUDGE. My dear Mr. Doray, this boy represents Young America. The discipline of a reformatory

might make him better and again it might make him infinitely worse. But if he is taken into a home where kindness prevails, where he will receive the sympathy and mother love of a woman such as your wife—(*pauses and smiles the smile of a big love of humanity*) My friend, this is the golden opportunity of that boy's life and I may say, Mr. Doray, of yours.

DORAY. That's all very well, Your Honor, but a man's home is his home and mine is a perfect little paradise. Everything is peace and happiness. Now why should I spoil it all by taking a *thieving little vagabond*?

JUDGE. You won't spoil it. The way to increase happiness is to share it with others.

DORAY. I don't care to meddle with happiness. I'm willing to leave well enough alone.

JUDGE. But the boy.

DORAY. Let the State take care of him. That's what I pay taxes for.

MRS. D. (*distressed*) Jack!

JUDGE. (*emphatically*) Our responsibilities as American citizens, Mr. Doray, do not end with the payment of taxes.

DORAY. Your Honor, you have no right to take such a stand!

JUDGE. My dear friend, I am taking no stand whatever. I am simply trying to protect this boy's future, and since your wife—who is an equal partner in your home, is willing and desirous of helping the boy, I had hoped that you would be generous enough to assist her.

MRS. D. And he will, Your Honor. You don't know Jack. Come, Arthur.

DORAY. (*turning to JUDGE*) Your Honor, I appeal to you.

JUDGE. The decision does not rest with me, my friend. It is a matter between you and your wife, and I may add, your conscience.

MRS. D. There, you see.

DORAY. Edith Doray, if you take that boy into my home I'll never set foot in it again as long as I live, never!

MRS. D. Oh, Jack, you don't mean that!

DORAY. Yes, I do. You must choose between him and me.

MRS. D. Oh, you can't mean such a thing, Jack?

DORAY. Yes, I do.

MRS. D. No, no, no! I know you too well, dear.

DORAY. You are not going to take that boy into my home.

MRS. D. But it's our duty to try and help the boy.

DORAY. It's not my duty.

MRS. D. It's the duty of all of us—yours, mine—and the Judge's.

DORAY. Then why doesn't the Judge do his duty?

JUDGE. I'm willing to suspend sentence if any respectable person will show an interest in the boy.

DORAY. Do you mean to insinuate that I'm not respectable?

JUDGE. Certainly not.

MRS. D. Of course not. He means that we are not only respectable but kind, and we are going to give the boy a chance.

JUDGE. Precisely. And, Mrs. Doray, if you are willing to look after the boy, I am willing to give him another chance.

MRS. D. Thank you, Your Honor. Come Arthur, we'll start on.

DORAY. Edith! (*enter COOMBS; meets MRS. D. and ARTHUR*)

MRS. D. Oh, back again, Mr. Coombs?

COOMBS (*indignantly*) Yes, back again! Missed my train! Missed my appointment! (*stops and stares at MRS. D. and ART., who are near L. door; looks over at DORAY*) What's the matter—didn't he give him the limit?

DORAY. Limit hell! He gave him to me!

CURTAIN

COOMBS. (*as the curtain is falling. Angrily going towards JUDGE*) Now look here, Judge—

SECOND CURTAIN

ACT III

SCENE:—Same as Act I.,—4 A. M. the next day. Chair L. of 'phone is changed to space between buffet and stairway; vacuum cleaner is struck; rocker placed close to window L. Small pillow on settee changed to armchair R. of 'phone table and large pillow from window C. to R. end of settee; water carafe struck from buffet.

AT RISE:—Set discovered. The room looks rather dark. Only two wall lamps, above buffet and below L. D. are lighted. On the bannister post of stairs is a boy's cap. Slight pause, then someone is heard unlocking L. U. D.

DORAY. (enter L. U. D. He has been out all night walking the streets; his looks and actions show it. He is tired, sleepy and disgusted. Has a half smoked cigar in his mouth. He pauses a moment in doorway as if debating whether to come in or go out, then comes in, closes door and crosses languidly to stairs. As he starts up stairs he puts hand on bannister post, discovers ART'S cap, picks it up, looks at it, glances significantly upstairs, then hurls cap savagely to floor, descends steps angrily, and starts toward L. D. The clock strikes four. DORAY stops and looks at clock. Disgusted and sleepy) Hell! (takes off coat, tosses it on chair beside table, shrugs shoulders as if chilly, yanks linen table-spread from table, crosses to couch and lies down. Comedy business trying to get comfortable. His straw hat is in the way, so he jerks it off and slams it viciously on floor. Comedy business trying to cover himself with table spread. It is wadded up lengthwise like a bath towel and keeps slipping between his legs. Finally when

he thinks he is covered, sighs, dozes off asleep, and cigar falls from his mouth)

CURTAIN

(Curtain is down ten seconds to denote a lapse of four hours)

(AT RISE of curtain DORAY is discovered sound asleep on couch and the hour hand of clock is at 8.)

MRS. D. *(enters from stairs R. carrying an alarm clock in her hand. DORAY is snoring. She stops on stairs and looks at him. Turns off wall lamp above buffet, puts alarm clock on 'phone table, then crosses to DORAY, bends over him and kisses him lightly on the forehead)*

DORAY. *(in his sleep)* I fine you ten dollars. *(MRS. D. picks up ash tray and puts it on telephone table, then gets his coat and spreads it over his shoulders)* I won't stand it, Your Honor, I simply won't stand it! *(MRS. D. smiles at him, then exits up R. with table cover, pushing pantry door back so that it will stay open)* Washington Slavinsky and Isaac White. *(MRS. D. re-enters from R. goes to buffet, puts coffee pot and cream pitcher on it, picks up ART'S cap from floor and places it on chair below the buffet, takes up water pitcher and fills both finger bowls half full. Alarm clock rings. She rushes up to 'phone table, grabs clock and tries to stop the alarm.)*

MRS. D. *(to clock)* Sh!

DORAY. *(in sleep)* "Sush" yourself. *(still sleeping as alarm continues)* All right, I'm up. *(the sound wakens DORAY, who sits up cross and sleepy)* What is this—the 4th of July?

MRS. D. (*over to buffet. Goes to table laying it*)
No, dear, this is Decoration Day.

DORAY. Then why the alarm clock? Don't you want me to have any sleep at all?

MRS. D. It went off by accident, dear. I brought it down to time the eggs with.

DORAY. (MRS. D. *crosses to buffet with clock*)
Eggs! So you're going to feed that little home wrecker eggs, are you? (MRS. D. *continues setting table*) Where is he?

MRS. D. You refer to Arthur?

DORAY. Yes, the boy poultry fancier—where is he?

MRS. D. Asleep.

DORAY. Asleep?

MRS. D. Yes.

DORAY. Where—in the spare room?

MRS. D. Yes, dear.

DORAY. (*drily*) That's nice. (MRS. D. *gets silver from buffet*) Do you know where I slept last night?

MRS. D. No, dear.

DORAY. Do you care?

MRS. D. Yes, dear.

DORAY. I didn't sleep at all, that's where I slept. I walked the streets all night; out into the country and back into town. I haven't tasted a mouthful of food since that trial. (*caustically emphatic*) And why? That's the point, Edith, why?

MRS. D. (*pleasantly tactful*) How do you want your eggs this morning, dear—boiled or fried?

DORAY. (*firmly as he rises and goes c.*) Never mind my eggs. Why did I stay out all night and why did I go hungry?

MRS. D. I'm sure I don't know.

DORAY. Oh, you don't.

MRS. D. No, dear. (*naively, and with a little smile*) Do you?

DORAY. (*pepperishly*) Yes, and so do you. (*pointing to the stairs R.*) It was that kid! He's why I stayed out all night.

MRS. D. (*kindly and sympathetically, but reserved*) I'm sorry, dear. (*crosses to buffet*)

DORAY. (*following her*) Edith, you knew I didn't want that little bum in this house, and yet you insisted on bringing him here.

MRS. D. (*as she takes three plates from buffet*) Why did I insist, dear?

DORAY. Because I opposed it.

MRS. D. (*wounded*) Oh, Jack, Jack!

DORAY. You knew I didn't want him. Why did you bring him here?

MRS. D. Because I wanted to help him.

DORAY. Help him! Your motive was all right, but your method was all wrong. Why didn't you let someone else help him?

MRS. D. (*placing the plates*) Someone else?

DORAY. Yes, you didn't have to do it. (*crosses to window seat up L.*)

MRS. D. If I didn't know you dear, I might think you very, very selfish.

DORAY. (*sarcastically*) Selfish? Ha! Ha! Ha! Are you setting that table for three? (*crossing C.*)

MRS. (*as she places third plate*) Yes, dear.

DORAY. (*goes to table*) Well, we'll just take off one of those plates. (*takes third plate from table*) I'll either eat without that kid or I won't eat at all.

MRS. D. Now please, Jack, don't act this way.

DORAY. I tell you I won't eat with that kid, that settles it. (*goes toward buffet with plate*)

MRS. D. Very well, dear, just as you say. (*starts for R. stairs*)

DORAY. Where are you going?

MRS. D. To wake Arthur.

DORAY. (MRS. D. *starts upstairs*) Let him sleep. The longer he sleeps the longer I can eat. I don't want any breakfast. (MRS. D. *stops. Sternly*) You can boil my eggs. (*crossing to C.*)

MRS. D. Yes, dear. (*starts up the stairs*)

DORAY. (*sternly as he goes toward stairs*) Edith, this matter has got to be settled right here and now. Who comes first in this house—that little bum or me?

MRS. D. (*tenderly and with a loving smile, as she comes down toward him, hurriedly*) Why, Jack, you know who comes first,—always and everywhere.

DORAY. (*impatiently*) Then why don't you do what I ask you? (*as he tries to take her hands, unconsciously rubs plate over them*)

MRS. D. Don't you remember, this is the day of Romney Burgess' fishing party?

DORAY. Fishing?

MRS. D. Yes, and I don't want the others to be kept waiting because of Arthur.

DORAY. Good Lord! You aren't planning to take him with us!

MRS. D. Why, yes, if he wants to go.

DORAY. No! (*starting L.*)

MRS. D. But Jack, dear——

DORAY. All right take him! I'll stay home! (*hurls the plate to floor. Door bell rings*) Come in! (MRS. D. *exits up the stairs. DORAY goes to chair L. and sits with his back to COOMBS as the latter enters*)

COOMBS. (*enters from L. with PINTO. COOMBS wears a white felt hat with a natty blue and white*

hai band—the stripes of blue and white running up and down; a dark blue suit and a bright blue necktie. He looks all dressed up. PINTO is a fluffy little snow white poodle, with a big blue ribbon on top of his fancy blue and white harness. He is led by a blue and white ribbon leash—to match COOMBS' hat band. COOMBS is ashamed of the dog and his expression and actions show it) Hello, Jack.

DORAY. (*gruffly*) Hello!

COOMBS. (*satirically*) What's the matter—got a cold on your chest?

DORAY. What makes you think so?

COOMBS. You talk like a bull frog.

DORAY. Oh, I do? Well, I don't look like one, and that's more than you can say.

COOMBS. (*resentfully*) That's it, take a shot at me. I come over here to give you a little sympathy and what do I get? Insults! (*indignantly on the defensive*) I'm not to blame for this hat.

DORAY. Who is?

COOMBS. My wife. She bought it and makes me wear it to carry out the color scheme on Pinto. See! (*cynically, as he points to PINTO*) Blue and white. (*pointing to hat*) Blue and white. (*points to necktie*) Blue. (*points to PINTO*) White. Hereafter, whenever I take that (*points to PINTO*) out walking I must wear this—(*points to hat*) And whenever I go out walking I must take that. (*points to PINTO*) If the day is cool or the sun looks as if it might slip under a cloud, I've got to take this (*takes a tiny blue dog vest from pocket*) and put it on that (*points to PINTO*) so that that (*points rapidly at PINTO during the following*) won't catch cold in his little tonsils and croak with the mumps.

DORAY. Say, for the love of Mike, did you come over here to tell me your troubles?

COOMBS. No, I came over to sympathize with yours.

DORAY. Thanks.

COOMBS. (*seriously*) When the Judge wished Art Simpson on you he did a dirty, mean, contemptible trick.

DORAY. Thanks, Billy. (*rises*)

COOMBS. And if there's anything I can do, Jack, to help you get rid of the pest, say the word and it's done.

DORAY. (*goes c. and shakes COOMBS' hand*) Thanks, Billy. - You're surely a true friend.

COOMBS. (*gravely*) This is a critical moment, Jack, and you must stand firm. We had a critical moment at our house when Pinto came. Juliet wanted to keep him—I didn't. We clashed. I held my own for five minutes—then I backed water. And I've been backing water ever since. Be firm, Jack, hold your ground!

DORAY. You bet I'll hold it.

COOMBS. Well, must go now, Jack. It's time for this little Siberian mouse hound to have his exercise. (*crosses towards door*)

DORAY. Aren't you going fishing with Romney?

COOMBS. No. That's what I came over to tell you. I've got to stay home and teach that to stand on its hind legs and bark like a dog. I used to be a regular person, Jack, now look at me. (*he picks up PINTO by leash*) Billy, the DOG-MAN. So long, Jack.

DORAY. Good-bye. (*COOMBS exits swinging PINTO like a pendulum*)

MRS. D. (*comes running down the stairs*) Jack!

DORAY. Yes?

MRS. D. He's gone.

DORAY. What?

MRS. D. Arthur is gone.

DORAY. Are you sure?

MRS. D. He isn't upstairs. He realized that you didn't want him around the place so I suppose the poor little fellow must have gone away some time during the night.

DORAY. Thank Heaven!

MRS. D. Jack!

DORAY. (*as MRS. D. picks up pieces of broken plate, puts them on table end of buffet and places a third plate on table*) There now, Edie, let's not quarrel any more. It's been my fault from the first and I'm sorry for the way I've acted in the whole affair. Instead of acting manfully, I've behaved like a baby. I promise never to do it again. Will you kiss and make up? (*when they are about to kiss*) Are you sure he's gone?

MRS. D. Yes. (*they kiss*)

DORAY. There! We'll never quarrel again as long as we live. (*pats her shoulder affectionately*) The boy is gone and the chapter closed. (*as she smiles faintly*) Now we'll hurry and get breakfast and be all ready to join Romney's picknickers when they arrive. While you're cooking the eggs I'll run up and shave. (*starts toward the stairs R.*)

MRS. D. Don't go now, breakfast is all ready. (*goes up R. and exits*)

DORAY. All right then I'll wait until after breakfast. (*as he opens rear windows*) Edie, this is certainly a great day for fishing! (*comes down C. Calls to MRS. D. off stage R.*) Edie, did you bring in the morning paper?

MRS. D. (*off stage R.*) No dear, I forgot it.

DORAY. All right, dear, I'll get it. (*exits L., gets paper, enters and comes to L. of table*) Oh! Edie, is there anything I can do to help you, darling?

MRS. D. (*offstage R.*) No, thank you.

DORAY. All right, sweetheart. (*sits at table, reading the paper and humming*)

"There was a bold fisherman set sail from old Pimlico
To catch some fine codfish and gay mackerel,
But when he got to Pimlico the winds they did begin
to blow,

His little boat did wobble so that over went he."

ART. (*enters from L. comes downstage L. and sits in rocking chair in front of window seat. Has JASPER'S harness, puts it on window seat. Sits facing window. He now wears a new suit of knickerbockers, stockings, shoes, shirt, soft collar and tie. His face is clean and his hair brushed*)

DORAY. (*sits whistling, happily looking at newspaper, unaware of ART'S presence*)

MRS. D. (*enters from upstage R. carrying breakfast tray with grape fruit, eggs and rack of toast. As she sees ARTHUR*) Why, hello. We thought you'd gone. (*ART turns chair to front and smiles at MRS. D.*)

DORAY. (*startled at hearing ART'S name. Thinking she is fooling, laughs*) Ha! ha! ha! Oh, I know you. (*he looks around quickly, sees ART then looks up angrily at MRS. D. Comedy situation. After a pause*) Edith Doray! (*springs to his feet, upsetting his chair backwards. DORAY savagely throws newspaper on settee and stalks out of door L., paces up and down outside for a moment, returns and sits in rocker facing L. window*)

ART. (*goes C. toward table*) Where's Jasper?

MRS. D. I locked him in the basement.

ART. How do you get to the basement?

MRS. D. Thru the kitchen. (*as ART starts toward pantry R.*) Don't you think you'd better wait until after breakfast?

ART. (*at pantry door*) I've been hunting him since six o'clock.

MRS. D. (*pleasantly*) Then you shall have him. (*as ART is about to exit*) I'll get him for you. (*ART comes down stage c.*) Jack, you and Arthur begin your breakfast. (*indicating R. of table*) This is your place, Arthur. (*turns toward DORAY*) Come Jack, the eggs will be getting cold.

DORAY. No, thank you, I don't care for any eggs this morning.

MRS. D. Then come and have some fruit. (*pleasantly to ART*) You like eggs, don't you, Arthur?

ART. Yes, but——

MRS. D. (*smiles*) I'm going for Jasper right away. (*coaxingly*) Do sit down, and begin your breakfast. (*ARTHUR sits R. of table. MRS. D. crosses L. to DORAY*) Jack, dear, you promised me——

DORAY. Now leave me alone.

MRS. D. Come on, dear, you promised to behave manfully. (*begins rocking the chair from behind*)

DORAY. Now don't be silly, Edith. Don't do this!

MRS. D. Come on. One! Two! Three! (*shoves chair forward spilling DORAY out towards table. He almost falls down. MRS. DORAY goes to him and takes him by the arm. Urges him to sit at the table*)

DORAY. (*grudgingly*) All right, but I won't eat anything, that's flat.

MRS. D. You don't have to eat anything, just sit at the table and look natural. Come along, dear. (*DORAY follows her R.*) Pick up your chair. (*indicates chair*) That's a good boy.

DORAY. Aw! (*comedy business and comedy ad lib. MRS. D. wants him to pick up chair—he doesn't want to—finally*)

MRS. D. Just for me, dear, just for me. (DORAY picks up the chair and sets it L. of table then goes to rear window) Did you rest well last night, Arthur? (MRS. D. picks up tray)

ART. Yes ma'am.

MRS. D. (to ART) Now I'll go and get Jasper, and you two start your breakfast. Don't wait for me. (exits R. to pantry carrying tray)

DORAY. (looks at ART who is smiling at him pleasantly) Who are you grinning at? (ART turns quickly away) I'll be doggered if I'll be cheated out of my breakfast by you or anyone like you. (DORAY comes to table, sits L., puts napkin on lap. ART unfolds napkin and tucks it under his chin)

DORAY. Hey! do you know what year this is?

ART. Yes, sir.

DORAY. Take that napkin out from under your chin. Put it in your lap—where it belongs—(sarcastic—quoting MRS. D. to himself) “Did you rest well last night, Arthur?”

ART. (beaming) Yes, sir. (ART takes napkin out and places it on his knee. ART and DORAY start eating grapefruit. Suddenly ART drops spoon and covers his left eye with hand. Juice from DORAY's grape fruit has hit him in the eye. Comedy business of rubbing eye painfully, then ART shoves spoon into his own grapefruit and it squirts juice into DORAY's eye. DORAY drops spoon and covers his eyes with his hands. He is angry and in pain) Wait a minute! Art. What's the matter?

DORAY. You're squirting juice all over me.

ART. Excuse me.

DORAY. (ART. picks up fruit and begins to eat it with his mouth) Take that thing away from your face. Put it on your plate and eat it like a gentle-

man. (ART *puts grapefruit down on plate*) If you eat at this table I'm going to teach you manners or know the reason why. Can't you eat a grapefruit without turning it into a squirt-gun? (ART *digs into grapefruit again*) For heaven's sake wait until after breakfast and then take it out in the back yard where you'll have lots of room. (DORAY *picks up his own fruit plate, lays it aside and dips his fingers into finger bowl. ART watches and does likewise, washing hands in the bowl*) How long can you stay under? (*points to finger bowl*) What do you think that is? A swimming pool?

ART. What is it?

DORAY. A finger bowl—(*dipping finger in bowl again*)—a finger bowl.

ART. Oh! (*dips fingers in bowl then wipes his hands on his shirt*)

DORAY. (*placing egg cup on plate*) Don't do that. Wipe your hands on your napkin—not on your shirt.

ART. The napkin's clean, my shirt ain't.

DORAY. Don't argue! I won't stand it. (ART has spilled water on table, wipes it with napkin. DORAY threatens him with egg—takes an egg from bowl, puts it in egg cup, cuts the top off, salts and peppers it and begins eating it)

ART. (*watches DORAY then takes egg from bowl*)
Is this my egg?

DORAY. No, the other one. (ART *drops egg and picks up the other one. Disgustedly*) Is this my egg? That's the limit! (MRS. DORAY *enters from R. with JASPER*)

ART. Hello Jasper. Come on, Jasper.

MRS. D. Can he do any tricks?

ART. Yes, ma'am. Do you want to see him do some. (*bending over*) Jump up on my back.

(*dog jumps on his back*) Now, sit down (*dog does*)
Open your mouth. (*dog does*) Now jump down.

MRS. D. My, did you teach him that?

ART. (*proudly*) Aw! That's nuttin', you ought
to see what he can do. (*to dog*) Stand up, Jasper.
(*dog rises on hind legs*)

MRS. D. Wonderful!

ART. Turn around.

MRS. D. Splendid.

ART. Walk around Mrs. Doray. Walk around
Mrs. Doray!

MRS. D. Bravo! (*claps her hands*)

ART. Now, go over to the chair, and get my cap
and bring it to me. (*dog does so*)

ART. Catch your tail. (*he does*)

MRS. D. (*delightedly*) He did—caught it right
in his mouth.

ART. Jump through! (*dog jumps through his
arms and back again*) Come on Jasper. Get up!
Now you stand up and tango. (*ART walks backward
humming a rag, JASPER following on his hind legs*)

DORAY. (*who has been watching the performance
with interest begins to clap his hands, keeping time
to the tangoing. As he sees MRS. D. and ART look-
ing at him, he rises angrily and rushes up the stairs.*
MRS. D. exits after DORAY. ART. throws cap in
rocker, gets JASPER'S harness from window L. and
fastens it on JASPER, who gets up in rocker)

NUTTY. (*appears at window upstage L.*) Hey,
Art! Art!

ART. Hello Nutty, what's the matter?

NUTTY. (*subdued voice*) Say, I'm coming in.

ART. Sure, come on.

NUTTY. (*crossing down R. c.*) Say—(*looking
around*) Jim Reuter's looking for you.

ART. What for?

NUTTY. He's got it in for you and he's comin' here to get Jasper and put him in the dog pound.

ART. Why?

NUTTY. Because you ain't never paid his dog license.

ART. I'd like to see anybody take my dog away from me. (*turns and pets JASPER*)

NUTTY. He will if you don't pay his tax. I cut across lots to beat him here and put you wise.

ART. What'll I do? I ain't got no money.

NUTTY. You'll have to get some.

ART. (*looks at money cup on buffet, starts toward it, then pauses and looks at NUTTY*)

NUTTY. Is that where she keeps it?

ART. Yes.

NUTTY. Then git it.

ART. I don't like to do this, Nutty.

NUTTY. Do you want to lose your dog?

ART. No.

NUTTY. Then go on and git it. (*ART starts towards cup to get money, then pauses*)

ART. (*going to buffet*) Do you think it will be all right?

NUTTY. I'll do it myself! (*crossing R.*)

ART. No you won't. He's my dog and if anybody's goin' to do it I'll do it. Watch the stairs.

NUTTY. Then hurry.

ART. It's no use, Nutty. (*crosses R., hesitates; turns*) I can't do it, I just can't.

NUTTY. Why can't you do it?

ART. Because she's been good to me. She makes me think of my mother and my mother wouldn't want me to steal, not even to save Jasper. (*crosses C.*)

NUTTY. (*taking the money from the cup*) All I got is a step-mother; I should worry. (*ART rushes over, tries to stop him*)

REUTER. (*appearing at rear window*) Hello Nut! Good morning, Arthur! (*to NUTTY*) Say, if that dog tries to get away from me again I'm going to take a shot at him, understand? A shot at him.

ART. If you shoot my dog it will be the last thing you ever do. (*crossing to dog. NUTTY goes up L. C.*)

REUTER. Well, well, well, see who's here! Little Jesse James! Now look here, you baby porcupine, I've come to collect your dog-tax and it's got to be paid. Ought to have been paid two months ago. You and your hound've been making a goat of me long enough.

MRS. D. (*enters R. Surprised at seeing REUTER*) Why, Mr. Reuter! Harold, what have you been doing?

NUTTY. I ain't done nuttin'.

MRS. D. (*to REUTER*) Then what brings you here, Mr. Reuter?

REUTER. I came to collect this boy's dog tax. It ought to a been paid three months ago.

MRS. D. How much is it?

REUTER. Two dollars.

MRS. D. Thank you, I'll pay it. (*goes to buffet. ART and NUTTY are now side by side. They watch her intently—anxiously*)

REUTER. All right, you're his sponsor. I'll just sit down and make you out a receipt. (*sits L. of table and starts writing receipt in receipt book*)

MRS. D. (*goes to buffet, finds money gone; looks at boys—dramatic pause*) Mr. Reuter, I don't believe I will pay that dog tax either.

REUTER. Eh?

MRS. D. I have decided not to pay the tax. (*replaces money cup on buffet*)

REUTER. Why didn't you say so in the first place? (*closes receipt book and rises. ART and NUTTY are now upstage with JASPER. ART starts to exit L. with JASPER*) Hey, what are you trying to do—fade away with him?

NUTTY. No, he's just going to give him a little fresh air, that's all.

REUTER. (*goes upstage L.*) I'll give him fresh air. And something else. (*business*) Gimme that hound! (*takes dog's chain from ART. ART watches REUTER. MRS. D. watches ART.*)

ART. (*to REUTER as REUTER takes dog's chain*) Wait a minute, will you?

NUTTY. Hold on!

REUTER. I've been waiting long enough. I've got him now and I'm going to keep him.

NUTTY. He said wait a minute.

ART. Yes, wait a minute.

REUTER. Are you going to pay his tax?

ART. How can I?

NUTTY. I'll pay it. (*hand in pocket*)

REUTER. Well?

NUTTY. I can't pay you now.

DORAY. (*comes down the stairs—to NUTTY*) Say, are you going to move in here too? Hello, Jim, what's the matter now?

REUTER. I came to get this cur. He's made me the joke of the department. Everytime a cop sees me he says "Hello Jasper!" And yesterday this little shrimp called me a big cheese! Me, a big cheese! and right in front of the Judge. I'll learn him to call me names in public. (*to JASPER*) Come on, you fiste! (*starts L. to door*)

DORAY. What are you going to do with him?

REUTER. Kill him.

DORAY. Kill him?

REUTER. Sure!

DORAY. Not on your life. (*pets JASPER*) Kill that, (*points to ART*) but when it comes to killing a poor innocent dog—not on your life! I like dogs—used to have one myself.

REUTER. All right, if you don't want him killed see to it that his tax is paid.

DORAY. That's a cinch. How much is it?

REUTER. Two dollars—ought to have been paid six months ago.

DORAY. (*paying REUTER*) There you are.

REUTER. All right! That lets me out. (*hands him dog chain*) Here's your dog—here's your receipt—I've got a brass tag here some place, to put on his collar. (*goes up a few steps. DORAY hands chain to MRS. DORAY and follows REUTER, who takes brass tag from pocket and hands it to DORAY*) There you are! (*to ART as he crosses to L. I.*) Say kids, you've certainly got a bunch of horse shoes around your necks. (*at L. D. to DORAY*) Well, I seen my duty and I done it. (*business with tooth*) So long, folks. (*exits*)

DORAY. So long, Jim. (*sits on stairs*)

MRS. D. (*handing dog chain to ART*) It is very fortunate that Mr. Doray arrived when he did. (*NUTTY comes down to ART, as MRS. DORAY goes up R.*)

NUTTY. Say Art, I'll see you this afternoon. (*goes towards L. D.*)

ART. (*NUTTY comes back to ART*) Wait a minute, Nutty.

NUTTY. What's the matter?

ART. Come across, come on—kick in! Kick in!

(NUTTY gives him the money. MRS. D. sees this out of the corner of her eye. JACK does not see it) Take Jasper and wait outside, I'll be with you in a minute.

NUTTY. All right! (*exits D. L. with JASPER*)

ART. Here, Mrs. Doray. (*handing her money*) The money that was took from the cup.

MRS. D. Did you take it? (ART doesn't answer) Did you? (*she takes it*)

ART. Yes ma'am. I took it because I was afraid I was goin' to lose Jasper.

DORAY. (*crossing to MRS. D. from foot of stairs*) There you are, what did I tell you?

ART. I didn't mean to steal it; I'm not a thief.

DORAY. How about those chickens?

ART. I didn't know it was regular stealing then—

DORAY. That's a peach!

ART. (*continuing broken speech*)—like stealin' money. But I know better now and I won't do it again. (*to MRS. D.*) I'm going to turn over a new leaf and get a job—and earn money enough to pay you back for the new suit and shoes and hat and all the other nice things you have given me. (*to DORAY*) I'm going to turn out all right, you wait and see if I don't. (*to MRS. D.*) You won't be sorry you kept me out of the Reform School. I've made up my mind to amount to something and you won't see me again until I do. Good-bye, Mr. Doray. (*holds out his hand*)

DORAY. (*takes ART's hand*) Good bye.

ART. Good bye, Mrs. Doray. (MRS. D. looks at DORAY and goes to him)

DORAY. Sh! He's in the right spirit. Let him go and fight it out by himself.

MRS. D. (*turns to ART*) Good bye, Arthur.
(*shakes hands with him*)

ART. Thank you for all you've done for me. (*exits*
L. 1. MRS. D. *sits in rocking chair and begins to cry*)

DORAY. (*going to her—tenderly*) Oh Honey, don't do that. It's the best thing that could possibly have happened to the boy. If he's got any good stuff in him it is bound to come out now.

MRS. D. He would never have taken that money!
(*crossing R.*) Arthur didn't take it anyhow.

DORAY. What do you mean? Why, he just admitted it.

MRS. D. Arthur did that to save Harold.

DORAY. What's Harold got to do with it?

MRS. D. Harold was trying to save Arthur.

DORAY. To save Arthur?

MRS. D. I mean to save Jasper. Oh, you've got me so excited I don't know what I mean. The poor boy! You treated him so mean that you just drove them both to it.

DORAY. I drove them to it! (*goes toward her*)

MRS. D. (*sitting at L. of table and covering eyes with handkerchief*) Oh this whole thing has made me perfectly miserable! (*pointing at DORAY, now at C.*) And it's all your fault.

DORAY. Oh, damn it all, stop blaming me!

MRS. D. (*jumping up*) Don't you dare swear at me!

DORAY. Now, Edie—!

MRS. D. You never swore at me before in your life! (*covers face with handkerchief and begins to sob*)

DORAY. Oh, for the love of heaven, good-night! I'm going out and get pickled! (*dashes up the stairs.* MRS. D. *follows him to stairs*)

MARJORIE. (*entering L. D. followed by ROMNEY, MRS. KING, and BENNY—all dressed up for picnicking*) Hello! (*to the others*) Hurry up!

MRS. D. (*wiping her eyes; coming down R. from stairs*) My, but you look picknicky.

MARJORIE. (*coming down L.*) We feel picknicky.

BENNY. Where's Jack?

ROMNEY. Yes, where's Jack?

MRS. KING. Why don't you hurry? It's past 8 o' clock.

MRS. D. (*to the men*) I don't think Jack is going.

ALL. Why not?

MRS. D. (*now at R. of table*) Ask him yourself. He's upstairs.

BENNY. Come on, Romney, we'll have to try a little oratory on him. (*exits up stairs*)

ROMNEY. Yes, and if oratory won't do, we'll use something stronger. (*exits stairs*)

MRS. K. (*to MRS. D.*) What on earth is the matter with Jack that he doesn't want to go?

MRS. D. He's upset over Arthur.

MRS. K. I don't blame Jack for not wanting him. (*sits in chair at L. of table*)

MARJORIE. I believe he'll be an awful nuisance. Of course, it really isn't any affair of ours, but—

MRS. K. It isn't, and then again it is. That boy is spoiling our picnic and he'll keep right on spoiling things just as long as you have him around the house.

MRS. D. (*crossing to her*) He isn't around the house, and anyway I think it very unkind of you to talk that way, Mrs. King. I don't see why you should interfere one way or the other.

MRS. K. I'm not trying to interfere—I'm just telling you what I think.

MARJORIE. Let's not discuss it, Fanny.

MRS. K. Why not? The boy's broken up our party, hasn't he?

MRS. D. I don't care to hear your views on the matter, Mrs. King. It's really none of your business. (*crossing up around L.*)

MRS. K. (*rising*) Excuse me for living!

MARJORIE. (*crossing R. to her*) Now, Fanny, please! If Mrs. Doray feels that way, why—

MRS. D. (*coming to them*) I do feel that way, and you'll both do me a favor by dropping the subject now and for good.

MRS. K. (*angrily, as she crosses toward L. D.*) Very well, I will drop it for good if that's the way you feel.

DORAY. (*to ROMNEY and BENNY as they come down the stairs*) No, boys, I'm in no humor to go.

MRS. D. Jack, you go to the picnic, and I'll stay here.

DORAY. (*crossing L.*) No. I'm in no humor to go any place.

MRS. K. (*indignantly*) Come on Benny. I don't care to stay where I'm not wanted.

BENNY. (*crossing to her*) What?

DORAY. (*at L. D.*) Why, what do you mean, Mrs. King?

MRS. K. I mean that your wife has been very rude and I've been insulted.

DORAY. (*crossing to Edith—at L. of table*) Why, Edith!

MRS. D. She was saying terrible things about Arthur, and I told her to mind her own business.

DORAY. Oh, that kid again! (*goes up toward pantry door*)

MRS. D. (*crossing to BENNY L.*) The trouble

with your wife, Mr. King, is that she talks too much.

BENNY. Well, I don't think that's a very nice thing to say—at least it doesn't seem ladylike.

ROMNEY. (*going to BENNY*) Benny! Benny! Now don't lose your head!

BENNY. You shut up!

MARJORIE. Romney, don't let him talk that way to you.

DORAY. (*crossing to BENNY*) Now, let's not have any trouble over this.

BENNY. Well, I think your wife should at least apologize.

DORAY. (*indignant*) What for?

BENNY. For insulting my wife.

MRS. D. I did no such thing.

MRS. K. She did too, didn't she, Margie?

MARJORIE. I don't think she meant to, Fanny.

MRS. K. You know she did. What are you lying for?

ROMNEY. Margie, don't let her talk like that to you.

MARJORIE. (*to ROMNEY*) Oh, you keep your mouth closed.

MRS. K. (*to BENNY*) I was only giving her a little advice about getting rid of that boy. (*BENNY goes up stage a step or two*)

DORAY. Well, I don't see where you have any right to come into my wife's house and tell her her own business.

BENNY. (*coming down to DORAY*) Don't talk like that to my wife!

DORAY. Your wife's a busy-body.

BENNY. Will you come outside and say that!

DORAY. You bet your sweet life I will! (*they*

start up L. Women scream and grab respective husbands)

ROMNEY. (*between the men and pushing them apart*) Now, now, boys, this is all wrong. (*after they have lined up again*) Now let's all shake hands and forget it. (*position; table, MRS. D., D., R., B., MRS. K.*)

BENNY. You keep out of this. (*ready auto horn*)

DORAY. You'll get hurt if you don't.

ROMNEY. Who'll hurt me? I'd like to see either one of you try it. I'll put you both on the sidewalk if you make any bluffs at me.

MARJORIE. (*going to him frightened*) Romney, please!

DORAY. (*driving them out*) Go on, get out of my house! The whole outfit! All of you! Get out! Out! Out! (*picknickers chattering angrily exit* L. D. MRS. K. *pulling* BENNY *off to keep him from striking* DORAY *and* MARJORIE *pulling* ROMNEY *off. DORAY closes the door and paces angrily back and forth, then to* MRS. DORAY *now seated miserably above table*) Well, I hope you're satisfied I've been cheated out of my fishing trip, my night's sleep, my shave, my holiday! The first time in my life I have sworn at my wife. Not only that, I've made enemies of all my neighbors. They'll never speak to me again. (*auto horn, auto effect sounds off stage: DORAY goes to window rear, and looks off*) There they go. There they go off for a good time. And here I am alone, marooned, miserable. And all because you tried to turn my house into an orphan asylum. (*going to table*) I tell you, Edith Doray, philanthropy is all right, but it does not begin at home. We were happy before that kid came between us. Weren't we?

MRS. D. (*sobs*)

DORAY. Are we happy now?

MRS. D. (*sobs*)

DORAY. Well, you may be, but I'm not. (*crossing L.*) And I never will be. My wife hates me, my neighbors hate me, I hate myself. I hate everything! (*returning to her, at table*) And why? That's the tragedy of it? Why? Because you tried to make an angel out of an angle-worm. I told you it couldn't be done, but you wouldn't listen to me. You *never* listen to me. That's the trouble nowadays. That's the trouble with the whole United States! WIVES WILL NOT LISTEN TO THEIR HUSBANDS. (*screams of confusion off stage.* DORAY runs to rear window)

MRS. D. (*anxiously going up rear*) What's the matter?

DORAY. (*on rear window seat, looking out*) They're coming back! Something has happened.

ART. (*entering L. D. excitedly, dramatically*) Mrs. Doray! Mrs. Doray! Jasper! Jasper! He's hurt!

NUTTY. (*looking off, as he enters L. D.*) Bring him in here, Mr. Larsen.

LARSEN. (*enters L. D.*) Say, this dog is pretty badly hurt.

MRS. D. (*eagerly*) How did it happen?

NUTTY. He ran in front of that automobile Mr. Burgess was driving—that fat guy.

ART. (*to LARSEN*) You don't think he'll die, do you?

LARSEN. Looks like it.

MRS. D. Bring the sofa down—put him on it. (*enter L. D. ROMNEY, MRS. KING, MARJORIE; they are greatly excited*)

ROMNEY. (*entering*) Where is the dog? Is he hurt? I tried to steer away from him.

BENNY. Gee! This is too bad!

MRS. K. Oh, the poor dog!

MARJORIE. Isn't it too bad! (*They go down to above sofa*)

DORAY. I'll get some camphor. (*dashes upstairs*)

MRS. D. (*to NUTTY*) Bring a glass of water from the kitchen.

NUTTY. (*dashing into pantry*) Water! Water!

ART. Don't let him die! Please don't let him die.

ROMNEY. (*to MRS. D. as DORAY re-enters with bottle of camphor*) Hadn't I better 'phone for a doctor?

MRS. D. Send for Billy Coombs; he knows a lot about dogs.

DORAY. Just the thing! Benny, run across the street and tell Billy Coombs to come right over. Tell him to bring his medicine chest.

BENNY. I'll have him over right away. (*exits on the run*)

DORAY. (*to MRS. D.*) Have we any spirits of ammonia?

MRS. K. I'll get it. Where is it?

MRS. D. In the pantry. (*MRS. KING rushes off, pantry*)

DORAY. (*to MARJORIE*) Bring a hot towel.

MARJORIE. All right! (*as she runs to stairs*) Hot towel, hot towel! (*exits*)

DORAY. (*to ART*) Get some ice.

ART. Yes sir! Ice! Ice! (*runs to pantry door, colliding with NUTTY*)

NUTTY. (*to ART*) You spilt this water, you big boob. (*exit ART into pantry, NUTTY gives empty glass to DORAY who places it on at head of sofa*)

DORAY. (*to NUTTY*) Run down to the drug store and get some plaster paris bandages.

NUTTY. (*dashing off*) Yes sir! Plaster paris bandages! Plaster paris bandages!

ROMNEY. Margie! Hurry! Come on with that hot towel. (*crossing to foot of stairs—at foot of stairs*) Margie! Hurry!

ROMNEY. (*at foot of stairs*) Margie! Hurry!

NUTTY. (*rushing back on*) Hey, do they give 'em away? (*turns trouser pockets wrong side out to show that he has no money*)

DORAY. Charge it to me.

NUTTY. (*dashing off*) Charge it to you! Charge it to you!

DORAY. Get me some beef tea.

MRS. D. We haven't any.

DORAY. Romney, go and get some extract of beef.

ROMNEY. Sure I'll get it right away. (*rushes out L.*)

ART. (*rushing on from pantry with a five-pound piece of ice*) Here's the ice, Mr. Doray.

DORAY. Crack it.

ART. Yes sir! Crack it! (*dashes off, pantry*)

DORAY. Where's the ice bag?

MRS. D. I'll get it. (*dashes upstairs.* DORAY runs to buffet for glass of whiskey)

MRS. K. (*enters*) Here's the camphor!

MARJORIE. (*enters*) Here's the hot towel!

BENNY. (*entering L. D.*) Here's the doctor.

COOMBS. (*entering rapidly with small black medicine case*) Where is he?

DORAY. (*pointing*) There.

COOMBS. (*over to couch*) How did it happen?

DORAY. (*pouring brandy into glass at buffet*) Automobile.

COOMBS. What have you done for him—anything?

DORAY. No, but I'm going to.

COOMBS. Going to! Great Scott, man, this dog needs a stimulant!

DORAY. (*going L. with brandy*) That's just what I'm going to give him.

COOMBS. (*takes glass from DORAY*) What is this?

DORAY. Brandy.

COOMBS. What that dog needs is a stimulant.

DORAY. Brandy is a stimulant.

COOMBS. Yes, but it was never intended for dogs. (*drinks brandy and crosses to table*)

MRS. D. (*enters from stairs*) Here is the ice bag, Jack. (*crosses to C.*)

COOMBS. (*placing medicine chest on table*) Good. Fill it with hot water.

DORAY. Fill it with ice.

COOMBS. (*amazed*) Ice for a weak heart?

DORAY. Certainly

COOMBS. Why, man, you're crazy!

DORAY. I'm not crazy. I know something about dogs myself, *Billy Coombs*.

COOMBS. You may know something, but you don't know much, if you say—

DORAY. When my dog was ill I used ice on him.

COOMBS. Did he get well?

DORAY. No, but—

COOMBS. There you are!

DORAY. Yes, but—

COOMBS. (*testily*) Now wait a minute: this is no time to argue. We've got a sick patient on our hands and the thing to do is to cure him.

DORAY. Then do it.

COOMBS. I'm going to if you stop talking long enough.

DORAY. You're the one that's doing all the talking.

MRS. D. Stop talking and do something.

ART. (*enters from R. with pan of cracked ice. to c.*) Here's the smashed ice, Mr. Doray.

COOMBS. Boil it.

ART. But Mr. Doray said—

COOMBS. Never mind what Mr. Doray says—I'm the doctor in this case. If you want your dog to live, do as I say. Hurry! (*ART exits up R.*)

DORAY. Now wait a minute, Billy—

COOMBS. Get a wine glass. (*takes bottles from case*)

MRS. D. *Don't* you think we had better—

COOMBS. This is no time to think. (*MRS. DORAY starts R.*) Never mind the spoon—accelerate his respiration.

MRS. D. (*puzzled*) Did you say—?

COOMBS. Accelerate his respiration—massage his ribs—loosen his lungs—beat his bellows—help him to breathe. (*reads label as MRS. DORAY runs to couch L.*) ?? stimulant.

MRS. D. (*beside dog on couch*) Hurry, Mr. Coombs, hurry! His heart is fluttering like a leaf.

DORAY. Yes, Billy, hurry, hurry!

COOMBS. (*crosses L. with glass of medicine*) Get him ready. Help me give it to him, Jack.

DORAY. (*over with COOMBS*) Certainly.

COOMBS. Open his mouth, Jack. That's the stuff. Nice doggie, now. Nice, doggie. (*getting the medicine into the dog*) There! (*all watch the dog*)

ART. (*entering from R.*) Have you give it to him yet? (*ROMNEY re-enters with jar of beef extract wrapped in paper*)

COOMBS. Yes.

ART. (*over to dog*) Is he any stronger?

COOMBS. (*feeling dog's heart*) Not yet.

ART. Come on, Jasper, come on! You're got to get well! You've got to get well!

DORAY. Of course he's going to get well. *(to others)* Fight for him. Fight for him.

ART. *(to DORAY)* Snap your fingers! It don't do no good if you don't make a noise.

EVERYBODY. *(loudly and snapping their fingers with all their might and main; they look as if they were shooting craps)* Come on, Jasper, come on! You're going to get well! You're going to get well. Come on, come on. *(NUTTY dashes in with packages—others don't see him—he comes down c.)* Come on! that's the stuff. Come on! Come on!

NUTTY. *(loudly)* Say, what is this—a crap game?

ART. Shut up! We're trying to save Jasper.

NUTTY. Is he still livin'?

COOMBS. Of course he's living. *(NUTTY crosses up to door L.)*

ART. Looky! See his eyes, they're gettin' bright! They're gettin' brighter! *(all look at dog)* Don't you know me? Don't you know me, Jasper? Jasper! Jasper! *(Brings dog on pillow to c. and placing pillow on floor kneels beside it—facing front)* Come on Jasper you're all right now, aren't you, Jasper? Of course you are. *(to MRS. D.)* See! He's all right now. *(to JASPER)* Aren't you, Jasper? Of course you are. Of course you are. Thanks for savin' him, Mrs. Doray, thanks.

MRS. D. I didn't save him, dear, Mr. Coombs saved him.

ART. Yes, but if it hadn't been for you, Mr. Coombs wouldn't have been here. You're the one that saved him. *(sobs)* Excuse me for crying—but I'm so happy—I thought Jasper was going to die. *(sobs—pause)*

DORAY. (*to BENNY and ROMNEY*) You folks run along or you'll be late for your picnic.

BENNY. All right again, Jack? (*takes hold of DORAY'S hand*)

ROMNEY. Will you shake hands with me, too Jack?

DORAY. Sure. (*they shake hands—all three men are holding hands. The three women are over R. kissing each other*)

BENNY. It's all right over there, too. (*points to women R.* PINTO *without leash enters* L. NUTTY *picks him up*)

NUTTY. (*coming down with PINTO L.*) Say! Who does this belong to?

COOMBS. Suffering catfish! The albino beauty has learned to trail me.

BENNY. (*exiting D. L.*) Come on, folks.

ROMNEY. Yes come on, or we'll never get started. (*crossing*)

MRS. K. (*exiting*) Good-bye everybody.

MARJORIE. (*exiting*) Good-bye Edie.

EVERYBODY. Good-bye!

COOMBS. Do you want a job, Nutty?

NUTTY. What'll you give me?

COOMBS. Six dollars a week and expenses.

NUTTY. What doin'?

COOMBS. Running errands in my office, and after office hours taking care of Pinto. All you have to do is to keep him out of my sight. Is it a go?

NUTTY. Sure. When do I start to work?

COOMBS. Right now. (*hands Pinto to him*) Here take him!

MRS. D. (*softly—kneeling beside ART who is crying*) Arthur—don't cry! Please don't cry. (*places hand on his head tenderly*) Arthur.

NUTTY. Don't cry, Art. I got a job now. (*holds*

PINTO *up*) See! Six bucks a week and tree of it goes to you. Nix, Art, you'll have me bawlin' in a minute.

ART. I can't help it, Nutty, I thought Jasper was goin' to die. (*rises*) Come on, Jasper. Good bye, everybody. (*crosses toward L. D.*)

DORAY. Where are you going?

ART. I guess I've given you trouble enough for one day.

MRS. D. (*to DORAY quietly but anxiously*) Don't let him go like that.

DORAY. (*emphatically—when ART is about to exit L. D.*) Come here! (*ART stops and looks at him*) Come here! (*ART goes to Mr. D.*) I've made up my mind to make a man of you if it takes me the rest of my life. Any body who loves a dog the way you do and admits that he has done wrong, is made of good stuff—understand?

ART. Yes sir.

DORAY. Then see that you don't forget it! (*comedy business by DORAY; he jerks the bottom of his own coat down, swells out his chest importantly and struts proudly toward the table*)

MRS. D. (*puts her arms around ART to DORAY*) He won't, dear.

COOMBS. (*to DORAY*) Say, you're beginning to talk like a regular father.

DORAY. I feel like a regular father!

COOMBS. So do I. (*looks at NUTTY; then to DORAY*) Say, let's take them to the ball game.

DORAY. Fine.

MRS. D. Splendid!

NUTTY. Will you go, Art?

ART. You bet!

DORAY. And it's a double header, too.

NUTTY. Some game? Huh? —

COOMBS. Precisely!

ART. (*to JASPER*) Gee, Jasper, don't it feel great to have a regular home!

MRS. D. We haven't had any breakfast. Have a bite, Billy?

COOMBS. No, I feel so good natured I couldn't bite anything. (*crosses extreme R. gets chair sits at table*)

DORAY. Then have some grape fruit. (*takes pillow off chair at L. of table and puts it on window c.*)

ART. Grape fruit's all right, but it gets in your eye.

NUTTY. (*crossing R. with chair*) Well I don't know much about it but I'll take a flyer myself. (*sits at L. of table with PINTO in arms*)

DORAY. (*has brought newspaper down from window c.—sits—looks at headlines*)

NUTTY. Who's pitchin'?

DORAY. I'll see.

COOMBS. (*taking paper from him*) Here, let me see. (*they all cluster around—COOMBS holding paper, and ART and NUTTY looking over his shoulder, all three facing up-stage*)

CURTAIN

YOUNG AMERICA

OFF STAGE PROPS

One cake of ice—R.
Alarm clock—R.
Live dog—L.
Ice bag—R.
Dishes—R.
Boiled eggs—R.
Clock effect striking off-stage—L.
Flour in small bags—R.
Cigar—R.
Coffee pot with hot coffee—R.
Toast—R.
Smelling salts bottle—R.
Straw hat—L. (Act II.)

ON STAGE PROPS—ACTS ONE AND THREE

Knife and fork for three in side-board drawer.
Dishes and silver to dress side-board.
Red table cloth on large table.
Telephone and books on small table.
Clock on wall, practical.
Vacuum cleaner, practical.
Two pillows on settee.
Two pillows on window seat.

ACT TWO

Gavel on bench.
Court-room papers.

